

# MS Trust Conference Programme

Sunday 23 – Tuesday 25 March 2025



**Programme title:** Translating evidence into practice

## Sunday 23 March 2025

**10:00** Registration and opening of conference exhibition

**10:15–11:00** UKMSSNA New nurse workshop  
Room 11

Therapists in MS (TiMS) New therapists meet and greet  
Room 12

**11:00-12:00** UKMSSNA AGM  
Room 11

TiMS update meeting  
Room 12

**From 11:30** Lunch and exhibition  
London suite & Rotunda

**12:00-12:45** **Symposium title**  
Satellite Symposium organised and funded by TBC  
**Lakeside suite**

**13:15–15:15** **Opening plenary session**  
**Paris suite**  
*CHAIR: TBC*

**13:15** **Welcome and introduction**  
*Lucy Taylor, Chief Executive, MS Trust*

**13:20** **Health Professionals Programmes & education update**  
*MS Trust HP Team*

**13:40** **Prodrome**  
*Professor Helen Tremlett, University of British Columbia, Vancouver*

Criteria of what the latest research is showing, starting of journey, initial symptoms – linked to new diagnostic criteria.

**14:10** **New McDonald criteria**  
*Dr Martin Duddy, Department of Neurology, The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust*

What changes can we expect? Links to earlier diagnosis. Explanation of impact on new criteria, translates to clinical practice and service delivery.

- 14:40**      **Why big data is important for you?**  
*Dr Will Brown, NIHR Advanced Fellow & Senior Research Associate, University of Cambridge*
- Examples of how it is already influencing your practice.  
What big questions we need to answer but currently can't [need more data].  
What you can do to get your patients benefiting from / contributing to Big Data – registries, CONSENTOR etc.
- 15:15–16:00**    **Refreshments, exhibition, and poster viewing**  
**London suite & Rotunda**  
Collect room keys from Conference registration desk in reception
- 16:00–16:45**    **Poster speed dating**  
*CHAIR: TBC*  
*Facilitators: Tania Burge, Head of Service; Sarah Millard, Education Manager & May Farrow, Health Professionals Administrator, MS Trust*  
**Paris suite**
- 16.45-17.00**    **Chairing a session**  
*TBC*  
**Room 11**
- Notetaking for Conference Digest**  
*TBC*  
**Room 12**
- 17:00–17:45**    **Symposium title**  
Satellite Symposium organised and funded by TBC  
**Lakeside suite**
- 18:00-18:45**    **Symposium title**  
Satellite Symposium organised and funded by TBC  
**Lakeside suite**
- 19:30**      **Welcome dinner & quiz**  
*Simon Webster, Helpline Manager and Quizmaster, MS Trust*  
**Paris suite**

## Monday 24 March 2025

**07:00-07:45 Morning yoga and/or outdoor exercise**  
*Jody Barber, Head of Integrated Clinical Services and Physiotherapist, Chilterns Neuro Centre; Laura Douglas, Neuro Physiotherapist and Co-Founder of Neuro Heroes, Neuro Heroes*  
**Room TBC**

**08:00-08:45 Symposium title**  
Satellite Symposium organised and funded by TBC  
**Lakeside suite**

### 09:00-10:15 Concurrent seminars 1: Breaking it down

Seminar 1 **Preconception, Pregnancy and post-partum management**  
*Daisy Cam, Lead Multiple Sclerosis Clinical Nurse Specialist. NMP & Dr Azza Ismail, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS FT*

The importance of a multi-disciplinary approach to optimize excellent care for women when thinking about pregnancy, through their pregnancy journey and their ongoing MS care following delivery.

Seminar 2 **McDonald criteria for diagnosis 2024, implications for clinical practice. What does this mean for your patients?**  
*Dr Wallace Brownlee, Consultant Neurologist, UCLH & Noreen Barker, Consultant Nurse, UCLH*

How is the McDonald criteria (2024) going to impact on diagnosis.  
What is the new technology for MRI?  
How should we be evaluating the optic nerve?  
What are the implications of diagnosis for new people with suspected MS.  
The new criteria will allow for diagnosis before symptoms, what information and content needs to be written for someone who doesn't have symptoms.

Seminar 3 **DMTs – back to basics**  
*Dr Floriana De Angelis, Consultant Neurologist, Luton and Dunstable University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust*

Why do we use DMTs, what are first- and second-line indications, what do we hope to achieve for the patient.  
Understanding the range of DMTs monitoring in relation to the clinical presentation of the patient. How and when to escalate any queries.  
What do we want to achieve with DMT's in relation to RRMS and progressive MS.  
Why do people with progressive MS on a DMT continue to deteriorate despite MRI being stable.  
Understanding the difference between relapse and progression management in relation to a DMT  
How do you explain to your patients about the DMT outcome.  
Essential information of the pharmaceutical summary for mechanism of action of the DMTs  
When to escalate to the MDT for review need for MRI and DMT

Seminar 4	<p><b>Research in a specialist MS role- channelling curiosity and maximising opportunities</b>  <i>Dr Hilary Gunn, Associate Professor in Physiotherapy, Plymouth University; Amanda Andrews, Professional Academic Lead - Advancing Practice, Birmingham City University &amp; Dan Kucharczyk, Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP) for Multiple Sclerosis, Wolverhampton Hospital</i></p> <p>This session aims to showcase how clinicians are already involved in research and may not even realise it! The session will challenge you to think about the ways to address the barriers we all face in trying to embed the 'how', 'why' and 'what' of our clinical questions into a research world / community.          We want to hear your voices so be prepared for an engaging, challenging and energetic session</p>
<b>10:15-11:00</b>	<p><b>Refreshments, exhibition and poster viewing</b>  <b>London suite &amp; Rotunda</b></p>
<b>11:00-12:15</b>	<p><b>Plenary session</b>  <b>Paris suite</b>  <i>CHAIR: TBC</i></p>
<b>11:00-11:45</b>	<p><b>Functional Neurological Disorders</b>  <b>Diagnosis, symptoms and rehabilitation</b>  <i>Dr Glenn Nielsen, Clinical academic physiotherapist, specialised in neurology and functional neurological disorder, St George's University of London</i></p> <p>Functional Neurological Disorder (FND) is amongst the most common diagnoses made by neurologists. People with FND can experience high levels of disability and distress that persists in the long term. The diagnosis exists at the interface between neurology and psychiatry, and many patients are unable to access treatment, falling in the service gap between physical and mental health. This talk will explore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pathophysiological models for FND</li> <li>• Diagnosis and misdiagnosis of FND</li> <li>• Functional symptoms in MS (“overlay” vs dual diagnosis)</li> <li>• Stigma and iatrogenic harm in FND, and</li> <li>• Practical approaches to treatment of functional neurological symptoms</li> </ul>
<b>11:45-12:15</b>	<p><b>Adjustment to diagnosis and transitioning to progressive MS the patient and carer journey</b>  <i>Dr Gogem Topcu, Programme Manager (NEuRoMS), University of Nottingham</i></p> <p>Adjustment to diagnosis, transitioning to progressive MS, consider in relation to new diagnosis criteria</p>
<b>12:15-13:15</b>	<p><b>Lunch, exhibition, and poster viewing</b>  <b>London suite &amp; Rotunda</b></p>
<b>13:15-14:00</b>	<p><b>Symposium title</b>          Satellite Symposium organised and funded by TBC  <b>Lakeside suite</b></p>

## 14:00–15:15 Concurrent seminars 2: Diving Deeper

### Seminar 1 **Lifting the lid on complex bladder and bowel management**

*Stef Nixon, North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS FT; Noreen Barker, Consultant Nurse, UCLH & Angie Rantell, Nurse Consultant, Urogynaecology King's College Hospital and Senior Lecturer in Pelvic Health, Brunel University, London*

Bladder dysfunction occurs in at least 80% of people living with multiple sclerosis. A healthy bladder is important to overall health and quality of life.

In over 40% of PwMS bowel symptoms are not detected, non-declaration and self-management are frequent reasons for not declaring. Often symptoms are present from the outset of the disease and remain problematic for the duration of the disease.

We are going to look at how we manage those complex patients for whom lifestyle changes and basic management techniques are no longer enough to manage their symptoms effectively.

#### Learning outcomes

- What do we define as complex bladder and bowel symptoms?
- What management pathways are out there and who can we get to help us manage these patients?
- Review of equipment that is available to our patients to manage complex bladder and bowel problems.

\*If you have any patients that you would like to discuss as a case scenario, please submit the details to the MS Trust conference organisers

### Seminar 2 **Is falls prevention even possible? Exploring the challenges of falls in MS**

*Dr Hilary Gunn, Associate Professor in Physiotherapy, Plymouth University*

Falling is a significant concern amongst people with MS, but the underlying problems and their potential solutions are far from straightforward. On one hand falls prevention is simple: reducing activity and avoiding risk will (usually) do the trick. However, service users, clinicians and researchers agree that this is definitely NOT the best approach!

This seminar will undertake a deep dive to explore **what** we really know about falls risk factors and falls management from the perspective of people with MS, research evidence and practical experience; **how** we could use this knowledge to inform future practice and research directions and **why** adopting a 'safe mobility' approach could be critical to address falls in a meaningful manner.

#### Learning outcomes:

- To explore the complexities of falls in MS, and the opportunities and challenges these issues present for service users, practice and research
- To evaluate potential avenues for falls management- (Spoiler- it's not all about exercise....)

- Seminar 3**      **Managing sex and intimacy in MS- supporting wellbeing**  
*Angela Gregory, Psychosexual Therapist COSRT acc (Senior), Nottingham University Hospital & Dr Ashley Brown, Postdoctoral research associate & Teaching Fellow, Kings College London*
- Basic understanding sexual function and the impact of MS symptoms.  
 Why sex matters.  
 Spontaneous verses responsive sexual desire.  
 Practical approaches to management of sexual dysfunction
- Seminar 4**      **DMT masterclass**  
*Dr James Varley, Consultant Neurologist, Imperial College Healthcare Trust; Rachel Dorsey-Campbell, Senior Lead Pharmacist Neurosciences, Imperial College Healthcare Trust & Dr Will Brown, NIHR Advanced Fellow & Senior Research Associate, University of Cambridge*
- What next? When the drugs stop working. Immunology, escalating therapies.
- Aimed at people already in practice, giving extra skills. Use of case studies.  
 Treatment change for disease activity, treatment change for complication of therapy. Compounding factor with comorbidities.  
 How do we decide on the sequencing of DMT treatment. What is the next treatment option. Considerations for family planning. Infection for older people. What to do when someone becomes JCV+ on Tysabri, Treatment de-escalation.
- 15:15-16:00**      **Poster viewing & poster authors question time**  
**Rotunda**
- Refreshments and exhibition**  
**London suite & Rotunda**
- 16:00–17:15**      **The Annual Helen Ley Lectures: plenary session**  
**Paris suite**  
*CHAIR: TBC*
- 16:00-16:30**      **Annual Helen Ley Lecture: Assessment and management of advanced MS. What is complex?**  
*Dr Eli Silber, Professor of Clinical Neurology, Kings College London*
- Managing challenging & difficult conversations.
- 16:30-17.15**      **Mental capacity assessments – a practical process for you to take away**  
*Tim Farmer, Independent mental capacity assessor, trainer & consultant, Stroud*
- A brief overview of the Mental Capacity Act before explaining a 3-stage process that you can use in any setting. Breaking the assessment process down into 3 main stages – the 'before', 'during' and 'after' – this will walk you through what you need to do at each stage to ensure your assessments are as robust (and practical) as they possibly can be.

**17:30–18:15**     **Symposium title**  
Satellite Symposium organised and funded by TBC  
**Lakeside suite**

**19:00**            **Pre-dinner drinks**  
**Rotunda**

**19:30**            **Conference dinner**  
**Paris suite**

**21:30 approx.**   **Disco**  
*Theme: Blue*  
*Something old, something borrowed, something blue.*  
**Paris suite**

## **Tuesday 25 March 2025**

**07:00-07:45**     **Morning yoga and/or outdoor exercise**  
*Jody Barber, Head of Integrated Clinical Services and Physiotherapist, Chilterns Neuro Centre; Laura Douglas, Neuro Physiotherapist and Co-Founder of Neuro Heroes, Neuro Heroes*  
**Room TBC**

**08:15–09:00**     **Symposium title**  
Satellite Symposium organised and funded by TBC  
**Lakeside suite**

## **09:15–10:30**     **Concurrent seminars 3: Complex clinical reasoning**

Seminar 1        **Posture management and access to computers and gaming**  
*Rob Lievesley, Clinical Scientist & Bex Oakes, Occupational Therapist, Specialist Disability Service, Oxford University Hospital*

### **Posture Management:**

The session will provide a journey through what posture is, and what influences our posture. The need to balance posture, function and comfort. What is important when assessing posture and why. The impact of asymmetry on the development of secondary complications e.g. pressure damage. What you can do to help provide stability and promote optimal posture in different positions for people with MS.

### **Access to Computers and Gaming:**

This session will look at options available for people with MS when accessing computers and game consoles becomes difficult. It will use a case study to explore how both mainstream and specialist options can be used as the condition fluctuates, and balancing how these can be implemented without interfering with other aspects of life.

Seminar 2        **The complex management of pain**  
*Katherine Dyer, Lead nurse in pain management services, Norfolk and Norwich University hospital & Laura Edwards, Clinical Associate Professor and honorary consultant in rehabilitation, University of Nottingham*

Mechanisms of neuropathic pain and wider associated causes of pain  
Pharmacological and non-pharmacological management with an MDT approach.

Strategies to initiate approaches for management of the persistent nature of widespread pain symptoms in MS.

Seminar 3 **Management of cognitive function in advanced MS**  
*Dr Anita Rose, Consultant Clinical Neuropsychologist, South Newton Hospital, Wiltshire & Susan Hourihan, Lead Occupational Therapist (Neuro-Sciences), UCLH*

How to assess cognitive deficits in the advanced MS patient.  
Tools and strategies to manage the impact of cognition with complex disability.  
Liaising with the MDT and wider agencies.

Seminar 4 **Artificial Intelligence in the MS Clinic: Where are we now and where are we going?**  
*Dr Kate Petheram, Consultant Neurologist, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust & Courtney Kremler, PhD Student, University of Cambridge*

This seminar will cover the fundamentals of artificial intelligence (AI), discuss the areas where AI is currently being used in MS care, and explore the future applications of AI in clinical practice such as DMT decisions, symptom management, and routine monitoring. Key examples of current research using AI to predict individual treatment response will be discussed, as will the ethics surrounding the use of AI, and the importance of robust data collection.

**10:30–11:00 Refreshments and exhibition**  
**London suite & Rotunda**

**11:00–12:15 Concurrent seminars 4: Looking after you, your patient, your service - you decide**

Seminar 1 **Domestic violence and abuse in MS**  
*Professor Helen Ford, Clinical Professor of Neurology, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust; Suzanne Britt, PhD Student, University of Nottingham & Kharis Hutchison, PhD Researcher, University of Leeds*

This seminar will consider how to recognise domestic violence and abuse and provide appropriate support based on the research findings from two PhD studies which have focussed on the perspectives of people with MS and healthcare professionals. This will include highlighting the prominence of coercive control in people's domestic violence and abuse experiences and the variety of forms this can take many of which are insidious in nature such as financial abuse and emotional abuse. Additionally, through the discussion of people with MS's experiences, the seminar will discuss the impact that domestic violence and abuse can have on MS and the cumulative effects of poor self-esteem and self-worth arising from negative views of MS and experiences of domestic violence and abuse. With regard to healthcare professionals, the seminar will also present findings on how those working with people with MS respond to the issue in practice, focussing on resources and support mechanisms that they feel would help them to address this important issue.  
Development of a tool kit to support clinicians in MS practice.



Seminar 2

**Living well with MS: engaging in activity and meaningful interactions**

*Dr Laura Edwards, Clinical Associate Professor and honorary consultant in rehabilitation, University of Nottingham; Laura Douglas, Neuro Physiotherapist and Co-Founder of Neuro Heroes, Neuro Heroes & Emily Davis, PhD Candidate Dance, Health and Social Science, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland-Glasgow Caledonian University*

This session will focus on engaging PwMS to participate in enjoyable, meaningful and accessible activities. From exercise, to dance, to companion animals, the speakers will take you away from traditional exercise programmes and towards therapeutic wellness interventions that are person centred and evidence based. By the end of the session, you'll understand the critical importance of activity and the benefits that music and interactions can have on your patient living with MS.

Seminar 3

**Taking care of yourself**

*Hannah Turner, Birmingham City University & Paru Naik, Director of Services, MS Trust*

Professional and personal self-care getting the balance right. Wellbeing for staff, protecting burnout.

This session will be an interactive workshop to provide you with some tools to consider for your ongoing self-management.

Seminar 4

**Vocational rehabilitation for people with multiple sclerosis**

*Dr Blanca De Dios Perez, Senior Research Fellow, University of Nottingham*

An overview of the evidence available on the barriers and enablers to job retention for people with multiple sclerosis (MS).

An interactive discussion exploring approaches to support people with MS in paid employment by understanding the interaction of MS symptoms, co-workers' attitudes, and work responsibilities. The seminar will be structured to cover key themes related to vocational rehabilitation during the professional life of the person with MS, focusing on:

- Needs of newly diagnosed people with MS at work.
- Disclosure (i.e., telling your employer that you have MS).
- Identifying reasonable adjustments in the workplace.
- Employer engagement.

The seminar will have a particular focus on the impact of cognition and fatigue at work.

**12:15–12:30**

**Comfort break  
London suite & Rotunda**

**12:30–14:00** **Closing plenary session**  
**Paris suite**  
*CHAIR: TBC*

**12:30-13:00** **Can we remyelinate?**  
*Professor Anna Williams, Honorary Consultant Neurologist  
Institute for Regeneration and Repair, Centre for Regenerative Medicine,  
University of Edinburgh*

**13:00-13:30** **Can we prevent demyelination?**  
*Professor Ruth Dobson, Clinical senior lecturer, Centre for Preventive  
Neurology, Queen Mary University of London*

**13:30** **Prize giving**  
**Flash talk posters**  
**Foundation Module student awards**  
*Lucy Taylor, Chief Executive, MS Trust & Tania Burge, Head of Service, MS  
Trust*

**13:50** **Closing remarks**  
*Caitlin Sorrell, Chair of Trustees, MS Trust*

**14:00** **Lunch & departures**