

# MS Trust Conference Programme



Sunday 22 – Tuesday 24 March 2026

Embedding evidence into clinical practice – Let's do it!

## Sunday 22 March 2026

**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** Promotional Symposium: Exploring Rescue Therapy in MS Care

Satellite Symposium organised and funded by **Neuraxpharm**  
Lakeside suite

**13:15-15:15** Opening plenary session  
Paris suite

Chair: Jo Hudson, Vice chair of Trustees, MS Trust

**13:20** Welcome and introduction  
Lucy Taylor, CEO, MS Trust

**MS Trust strategy and research updates**

Lucy Taylor, CEO, MS Trust

Ruth Stross, Director of Services, MS Trust

**13:40** Revisiting MS diagnosis and terminology: understanding the revised McDonald criteria and evolving concepts - Relapse Associated Worsening (RAW) and Progression Independent of Relapse Activity (PIRA)

Dr Wallace Brownlee, Consultant Neurologist, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Dr Agne Straukiene, Consultant Neurologist, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

This session will explain the key updates to MS diagnostic criteria and how they enhance diagnostic accuracy and consistency. We will define and

interpret emerging terms such as RAW and PIRA, highlighting their clinical and research significance, before exploring how updated terminology and diagnostic criteria inform multidisciplinary assessment and monitoring of progression. Finally, we will discuss practical approaches for communicating new concepts to patients and integrating them into holistic care planning.

**Multiple Sclerosis across the lifespan: promoting brain health and optimising care in older adults**

**14:10**

Professor Jennifer Graves, Consultant Neurologist, Professor and Vice chair of Human Clinical Research, University of California, San Diego

Dr Chris McMurrin, Academic Neurology Registrar, University of Cambridge

This session will investigate how ageing interacts with the biological mechanisms of multiple sclerosis and evaluate strategies to promote brain health and resilience in people with MS as they age. The session will also recognise how MS symptoms and disease presentation evolve over time. It will discuss practical, person-centred approaches to managing MS in older adults, including adjustments to treatment, rehabilitation, and holistic care planning.

**15:15-15:50**

**Refreshments, exhibition and poster viewing  
London suite & Rotunda**

Collect room keys from Conference registration desk in reception. Keys can be collected throughout the afternoon.

**15:50- 16:45**

**Poster speed dating**

**Paris suite**

Chair: David Philpot, Trustee, MS Trust

**16:45-17:00**

**Chairing a session**

**Room 11**

Dr Wendy Hendrie, MS Specialist Physiotherapist, Norwich

**17:00-17:45**

**Impact of OCREVUS (ocrelizumab) beyond the Infusion, *The Interactive Health Hour***

Satellite Symposium organised and funded by **Roche Products Ltd.**  
**Lakeside suite**

**18:00-18:45**

**TYSABRI (natalizumab) SC at Home: Evidence, Experience and What's Next with Self Administration**

Satellite Symposium organised and funded by **Biogen**  
**Lakeside suite**

**19:30**

**Welcome dinner and quiz  
Paris suite**

**Monday 23 March 2026**

**07:00-07:45 Morning yoga**

## ***Hansom Suite***

Jody Barber, Consultant Physiotherapist Neuromuscular Diseases, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

### **08:00-08:45 Monitoring what matters: using PROMs to improve patient care in MS**

Satellite Symposium organised and funded by **Sanofi**  
**Lakeside suite**

### **09:00-10:15 Plenary session Paris Suite**

Chair: Sue Thomas, Independent Healthcare Consultant, Witheridge

### **09:00-10:15 Leadership and service transformation in MS care**

Professor Helen Ford, Consultant Neurologist and Honorary Clinical Professor of Neurology, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Sue Thomas, Independent Healthcare Consultant, Witheridge

Dr Kate Petheram, Consultant Neurologist, South Tyneside & Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

This session will examine current NHS strategies and workforce plans relevant to neurology and MS services, identifying the challenges and opportunities for health professionals in adapting to system changes while maintaining safe, high-quality care for people with MS. It will reflect on how multidisciplinary teams can evolve services collaboratively, providing a national overview of NHS transformation programmes and explore practical approaches to service leadership and redesign.

### **10:15-11:00 Refreshments, exhibition and poster viewing London suite & Rotunda**

### **11:00-12:15 Concurrent seminars 1: Breaking it down**

#### **Seminar 1 Travel and MS: staying safe abroad with DMTs and immunosuppression**

**Room 11** Chair: Rachel Dorsey-Campbell, Consultant Pharmacist, Neurology, Imperial College Healthcare Trust

Victoria Browne, Senior Clinical Nurse Specialist, Travel Health Lead, Hospital of Tropical Diseases

Mavis Ayer, MS Lead Community Nurse Specialist, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust

Stavroula Charisi, Highly Specialist Pharmacist - Multiple Sclerosis, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust

This session will explain key considerations for travelling with disease-modifying therapies (DMTs), outlining vaccination and infection-prevention strategies for people on immunosuppressive MS treatments. It will also discuss practical and holistic support for people with MS planning travel.

Seminar 2 **Fatigue management for working people with MS**

**Lakeside**

Chair: Susan Hourihan, Lead Occupational Therapist (Neurosciences), University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Co-chair of TiMS (Therapists in MS)

Dr Rebecca Maguire, Associate Professor in Psychology, Maynooth University and Person with MS

Joanne Hurford, Occupational Therapist, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

This session will explore practical occupational therapy approaches to assessing and managing fatigue in people with MS who are in employment. It will identify workplace strategies and reasonable adjustments that can help individuals maintain productivity, wellbeing, and work-life balance. It will go on to examine the psychological and lived experience of fatigue in working life and highlight evidence-based coping techniques and self-management tools that empower people with MS to sustain employment and quality of life.

Seminar 3 **Pregnancy and MS: Pre-conception, DMT decisions, and Postpartum Management**

**Room 12**

Chair: Dr Kate Petheram, Consultant Neurologist, South Tyneside & Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Dr Karen Chung, Consultant Neurologist, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Denisse Bongol, MS Clinical Nurse Specialist, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

This session will outline evidence-based guidance on pre-pregnancy counselling and DMT selection, discuss management of MS during pregnancy and the postpartum period, including relapse risk, treatment timing, and breastfeeding considerations. It will go on to explore the nurse's role in supporting women through pregnancy planning and ongoing care - ensuring continuity, education, and emotional support and identifying practical approaches to postpartum follow-up and multidisciplinary coordination.

**12:15-13:00 Lunch, exhibition and poster viewing  
London suite & Rotunda**

**13:00-13:45 Driving Change in MS Care: Leveraging Barts Real-World Evidence for Stratified Populations**

Satellite Symposium organised and funded by **Merck**  
**Lakeside suite**

**14:00-15:15 Concurrent seminars 2: Diving deeper**

Seminar 1 **DMT Masterclass: From new to experienced prescribers – governance, audit, and evolving practice**

**Room 11**

Chair and presenter: Dr Owen Pearson, Consultant Neurologist, Swansea Bay University Health Board

Professor Jeremy Hobart, Chief Scientific Officer at Transform MS CIC & Emeritus Professor University of Plymouth

Laura Carrington, MS Clinical Nurse Specialist, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Sumrah Shaffiq, Advanced Clinical Pharmacist - Neurosciences & Workforce Development, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

This session will provide an overview of current and emerging DMT prescribing frameworks, discussing practical challenges and solutions in DMT prescribing. It will examine governance and auditing processes that support safe, effective, and compliant prescribing practice within multidisciplinary teams. It will also explore the evolving role of non-medical prescribers in MS care, including competence development, accountability, and collaboration with neurology teams.

Seminar 2 **Osteoporosis, bone health and menopause: A multidisciplinary approach to neurological care**

**Lakeside**

Chair: Jody Barber, Consultant Physiotherapist Neuromuscular Diseases, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Dr Kate Petheram, Consultant Neurologist, South Tyneside & Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Katrina Buchanan, Consultant Physiotherapist, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Ruth Stross, Director of Services, MS Trust

This session will discuss the neurological and systemic factors influencing bone health in people with MS. Including the impact of menopause, reduced mobility, and long-term medication use. It will explore physiotherapy-led strategies to promote bone strength and prevent fractures, focusing on safe movement, exercise, and functional rehabilitation in neurological populations. It will highlight the nurse's role in supporting women through menopause and bone health management.

Seminar 3 **Advanced Clinical Practice in MS: The art of differentiation in complex consultations**

**Room 12** Chair: Julie Taylor, Advanced Multiple Sclerosis Specialist Nurse  
York Teaching Hospital

Dan Kucharczyk, Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP) for Multiple Sclerosis, The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

This session will examine the Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP) approach to MS consultations and recognise the challenges of polypharmacy and comorbidity in people with MS. It will explore strategies to identify medication-related or alternative explanations for symptoms. It will also reflect on how advanced practice principles 'Jack of all Trades, Master of One'— support safe, autonomous decision-making and enhance collaboration with GPs and the wider multidisciplinary team.

**15:15-16:15** **Poster viewing and poster authors question time**  
**Rotunda**

**Refreshments and exhibition**  
**London suite & Rotunda**

**16:15-17:15** **The Annual Helen Ley Lectures: plenary session**  
**Paris suite**

Chair: Fiona Chiplen, Consultant in palliative medicine, Weston Hospice care

**16:15-16:45** **Assisted Dying Bill – legal, ethical and clinical perspectives for MS care**

Dr Fiona Chiplen, Consultant in palliative medicine, Weston Hospice care

Richard Huxtable, Professor of Medical Ethics and Law, Centre for Ethics in Medicine, Chair, UK Clinical Ethics Network, Chair, Board of EACME

This session will summarise the latest developments and proposed changes in assisted dying legislation across the UK, including their ethical implications and explore the ethical considerations and professional responsibilities that healthcare professionals must navigate. It will examine the practical and emotional impact of assisted dying discussions on health professionals and provide strategies for having open, person-centred conversations about end-of-life wishes within the current legal framework, ensuring patients and families feel heard and supported.

**16:45-17:15** **Future care planning – Navigating challenges and embedding good practice**

Dr Ruth Isherwood, Consultant in Palliative Medicine and Training Programme Director for Palliative Medicine, NHS Tayside

Sarah Roderick, Interim Head of Research and Engagement, MS Trust, Retired Clinical Nurse Specialist in MS

This session will outline evidence-based and policy-aligned approaches to future care planning in progressive neurological disease, highlighting key principles of good practice in palliative and anticipatory care. It will discuss common challenges and ethical considerations when implementing future care planning, share practical strategies and recommendations for integrating

future care planning into routine MS care. It will go on to explore the nurse's role in navigating sensitive conversations around prognosis, values, and preferences, while maintaining trust and person-centred support for individuals and families.

**17:30–18:15 Kesimpta: from evidence to everyday practice**

Satellite Symposium organised and funded by **Novartis UK Ltd.**  
**Lakeside suite**

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

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

**21:30 approx. Disco**  
**Paris suite**  
*Theme: Butterfly ball*

**Tuesday 24 March 2026**

**07:00-07:45 Morning yoga**  
**Hansom Suite**  
Jody Barber, Consultant Physiotherapist Neuromuscular Diseases,  
University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

**08:00-08:45 New McDonald criteria: What does earlier diagnosis mean for MS services, patient pathways and DMT selection?**

Satellite Symposium organised and funded by **Juvisc Pharmaceuticals**  
**Lakeside suite**

**09:00-10:15 Concurrent seminars 3: Developing consultations**

**Seminar 1 Respiratory management in advanced and complex MS – Insights from the TiMS project**

**Room 11 Chair:** Dr Wendy Hendrie, MS Specialist Physiotherapist, Norwich

Jody Barber, Consultant Physiotherapist Neuromuscular Diseases,  
University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Ruth O'Regan, MS Champion - Physiotherapist, Norfolk and Norwich  
University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

This session will present key findings and learnings from the TiMS project on advanced respiratory management in complex MS, highlighting evidence-based physiotherapy interventions and multidisciplinary approaches that optimise respiratory function and quality of life in people with advanced MS. It will also discuss practical implementation of respiratory management strategies across community and inpatient settings. We will share good practice recommendations and collaborative models.

Seminar 2 **Bridging the gap: Acute and community approaches to MS care**

**Lakeside**

Speaker and Chair: Michelle Davies, Dorset MS Service Lead & Specialist Practitioner, University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust

Rachel Dorsey-Campbell, Consultant Pharmacist, Neurology, Imperial College Healthcare Trust

Joan Bradley, Lead Specialist Nurse, Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Dr Sara Ahsan, Speciality Doctor, Rehabilitation Medicine. Daniels and Alderbourne Rehabilitation Units, The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

This session will highlight the role of acute multidisciplinary teams in managing complex MS presentations, how integrated pathways and shared care models can enhance continuity and communication between acute and community MS services, and examine the challenges faced by community teams supporting PwMS post-discharge. We will also share practical examples of collaborative working that improve patient experience and outcomes. We will lead an interactive discussion on key service challenges and priorities for improving the MS care journey.

Seminar 3 **Smart moves: How mobility wearables empower lifestyle management and promote brain health in MS**

**Room 12**

Chair: Sarah White, Trustee, MS Trust

Gavin Brittain, NIHR Academic Clinical Lecturer, The University of Sheffield

Ellen Buckley, Research Fellow, The University of Sheffield

Wearable mobility sensors are transforming how we understand and support people with multiple sclerosis. By capturing real-world movement and activity patterns, these technologies offer new ways to monitor disease progression, guide personalised interventions, and empower people to take an active role in their wellbeing. This session will explore how mobility wearables can be used in practice to empower people with MS, inform multidisciplinary care, and promote active, brain-healthy lifestyles.

**10:15-11:00 Refreshments and exhibition  
London suite & Rotunda**

**11:00-12:15 Concurrent seminars 4: Living well**

**Obesity, diet, and disease progression in MS: Evidence, challenges, and practical strategies**

Chair: Rhian O'Halloran, Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist in MS, University Hospital of Wales

Seminar 1 Gail Shore, MS Clinical Nurse Specialist, The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

**Lakeside**

Farah Suleman, Specialist Neurology Dietitian, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

Erik Forker, Specialist Neurosciences Dietitian, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

This session will examine how obesity and diet influence MS progression, symptom burden, and comorbidities, summarising evidence linking the Mediterranean diet. We will share practical, evidence-based lifestyle and dietary strategies for MS care where specialist input is limited. We will also discuss how weight and nutrition can affect MS treatment planning, DMT efficacy, fatigue, and mobility and consider future directions for integrating nutrition and weight management into multidisciplinary MS care.

Seminar 2 **Equity in action: Improving MS care in minority communities**

**Room 11**

Chair and presenter: Professor Helen Ford, Consultant Neurologist and Honorary Clinical Professor of Neurology, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Dr Alison Thomson, Reader in Design, Queen Mary University of London

Sarah Watson, Advanced MS Champion, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

This session will examine how social determinants of health influence MS presentation, access to care, and outcomes in minority communities, identifying opportunities for more equitable service delivery. It will also explore how meaningful patient and public involvement can shape culturally sensitive MS services and improve trust, communication, and engagement in research. We will present case studies demonstrating participatory and community-led approaches to improving MS care pathways and reducing health inequalities among underrepresented groups.

Seminar 3 **Living well with progressive MS – Research, resilience and real-world recommendations**

**Room 12**

Chair: Sarah Roderick, Interim Head of Research and Engagement, MS Trust, Retired Clinical Nurse Specialist in MS

Nikos Evangelou, Consultant Neurologist, University of Nottingham

Dr Silvia Poli, Postdoctoral researcher, Department of Neuroscience, Biomedicine and Movement, University of Verona, Italy and programme manager for Living Well with Progressive MS (LIMS) project

This session will present findings from the Queen Elizabeth and international Living Well with Progressive MS studies and discuss clinical recommendations for improving outcomes and wellbeing in progressive MS. We will explore the psychological and behavioural dimensions of living well with progressive MS and share practical recommendations for embedding psychological wellbeing and self-management strategies into MS services.

**12:15-12:30**    **Comfort break**

**12:30-14:00**    **Closing plenary session  
Paris suite**

Chair: Christine Singleton, Trustee, MS Trust

**12:30-13:00**    **Mind and MS: Understanding and managing mental health in  
Multiple Sclerosis**

Dr David Okai, Consultant Neuropsychiatrist Associate Medical Director, National Specialist Psychiatry Services, PMOA Co-Clinical Director, Maudsley Private Senior Lecturer, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

This session will examine the prevalence, mechanisms and clinical presentation of mental health conditions in MS, including depression, anxiety, and adjustment disorders, and how these interact with neurological symptoms. It will also provide evidence-based recommendations for the assessment and management of mental health in MS.

**13:00-13:30**    **Multiple Sclerosis and comorbidities: Challenges and  
opportunities for integrated and holistic care**

Dr Charles Wade, Clinical Research Fellow & Neurology Registrar, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

This session will describe the prevalence and impact of common comorbidities in people with multiple sclerosis, analysing the challenges of managing MS alongside comorbidities. It will apply evidence-based and holistic treatment strategies to optimise outcomes for people with MS and comorbidities.

**13:30**    **Poster prize giving**

**13:40**    **Closing remarks**  
Caitlin Sorrell, Chair of Trustees, MS Trust

**14:00**    **Lunch & departures**

## **Declarations**

The MS Trust would like to thank all our sponsors and exhibitors for their support.

Their sponsorship supports the educational sessions of the meeting. The content of these educational sessions has been developed by the MS Trust.

## **Sponsor and exhibitor declarations**

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