



## Coming of age: 21 years of Conference

**Amanda Barrell, Lemonade Studio**

More than 250 MS nurses and allied health professionals attended the [MS Trust annual conference](#) to share knowledge and learn from each other.

This year's event, held at Jurys Inn Hinckley Island Hotel, marked the meeting's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, and offered a chance to see how far the community had come.

Chris Jones, who co-founded the charity, looked back to a landscape that is, thankfully, almost foreign to those working in the field today.

*“When I was diagnosed in the 1980s, it was considered unhealthy to ask questions about your condition. It was a pat on the head from your neurologist, who told you to go home, live with it and come back when you get worse,”*

she told delegates.

*“MS might not be curable, but it is far from untreatable. People were not being treated for symptoms that were manageable.”*

There were 118 delegates at the first conference, many of whom, including a number of speakers, attended this year's coming of age event.

It featured a characteristically varied and practical programme. Consultation skills, symptom management, risk and therapy were among the main themes, and a particular focus on meeting the needs of people with advanced disease ran throughout the event.

MS Trust chief executive Pam Macfarlane noted the similarities between the first and most recent meeting agendas, both of which focused on the holistic care of people with MS. She added, however, that a lot had changed and there were still challenges to overcome.

*“We have gone from four to 14 disease modifying drugs in the last 10 years. Treating MS takes a multidisciplinary team and it is really important to manage symptoms.*

*“We have grown and moved forward but we are still the Cinderella when it comes to money and resources. Having equitable services for all is critical.”*

For the third year running, the conference started early for some, as the [Quality in the Delivery of Services \(QuDoS\) in MS recognition programme](#) ceremony was held on the Saturday evening.

Organised by Pharmaphorum in partnership with the MS Trust, and sponsored by Biogen and Roche, QuDoS aims to highlight innovation and excellence in MS management and service delivery.

Compering the awards ceremony event, Dr Trevor Pickersgill, Consultant Neurologist at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, said:

*“The quality of entries was exceedingly high, there were so many examples of good practice from which everyone in the field can learn.”*



Pam said that QuDoS reflected the values of the charity and of the conference, adding that the health and wellbeing of people with MS was at the very heart of everything MS healthcare professionals did.

*“The MS Trust conference has always been about the community coming together to share knowledge and expertise,”*

she said.

*“It goes back to the original aims of the charity: to produce good quality information for people with MS and healthcare professionals, so you can be a true partnership, making decisions together and achieving better outcomes.”*

Keep your eyes peeled for more detailed coverage of the 21<sup>st</sup> MS Trust annual conference in the coming weeks.

Slides presented at this year’s conference are now available on the [conference web page](#)

Read more about QuDoS 2017 [here](#)