

# Talks With MS

## Trustees' Annual Report

For the Year Ended 31 January 2025

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### 1. Reference and Administrative Details

**Charity Name:** Talks With MS

**Charity Registration Number:** 1201569

**Registered Address:** 23 Joselyn Close, Middlesex EN3 6GE

**Trustees in Office During the Year:**

- Terri-Louise Brown (Founder & Trustee)
  - Joseph Brown
  - Yolande Brown
  - Sab'tisha Louise Gordon
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### 2. Structure, Governance and Management

Talks With MS is a registered charity governed by a Board of Trustees who hold ultimate responsibility for the strategic direction, financial stewardship, legal compliance, safeguarding, and overall governance of the organisation. The Trustees meet regularly throughout the year to review performance, approve strategic priorities, oversee financial management, and ensure the charity operates in line with Charity Commission requirements and relevant legislation.

The charity is **registered with the Fundraising Regulator**, demonstrating its commitment to best practice, transparency, and ethical fundraising in line with the Code of Fundraising Practice. This registration provides reassurance to donors, partners, and the wider public that fundraising activity is carried out responsibly and with accountability.

Talks With MS is also **registered with the Sunflower Lanyard scheme**, reflecting the charity's commitment to improving visibility, recognition, and support for people with hidden disabilities. This registration supports the charity's wider advocacy work around invisible conditions and accessibility, and reinforces its values-led approach to inclusion.

Trustee recruitment is carried out through community networks, professional referrals, and open calls, with a focus on lived experience, diversity, and skills-based governance. The

Board seeks a balance of trustees with experience in disability advocacy, safeguarding, finance, risk management, and community engagement.

All new trustees receive a structured induction, including an overview of the charity's mission, strategic objectives, safeguarding responsibilities, financial controls, conflicts of interest, risk management, and governance processes. Trustees are supported with ongoing learning and sector updates to ensure good governance and compliance.

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### 3. Objectives and Public Benefit

#### Charitable Objectives

Talks With MS exists to empower, connect, and support people living with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and hidden disabilities. The charity aims to reduce isolation, improve access to peer support, increase understanding of MS and hidden disabilities, and advocate for accessibility and inclusion across society, workplaces, and public services.

The charity's work is rooted in lived experience and community-led design, ensuring that services and programmes reflect the real needs of people navigating diagnosis, fluctuating symptoms, mobility challenges, fatigue, mental health impacts, and the social barriers associated with hidden disabilities.

#### Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have had due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The charity delivers public benefit by creating accessible, inclusive spaces for support and connection; improving wellbeing; reducing loneliness; empowering individuals to self-advocate; and raising awareness of MS and hidden disabilities through education and storytelling. Activities are open to the public and designed to create positive social impact.

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### 4. Achievements and Performance

#### Community Engagement and Peer Support

During the 2024/2025 reporting period, Talks With MS delivered **eight community and research events**, engaging **just under 400 participants** across a combination of in-person and virtual formats. These events provided safe, accessible spaces for individuals living with MS to share experiences, access emotional support, and build community connections. Feedback from participants highlighted improved wellbeing, reduced feelings of isolation, and increased confidence in navigating life with MS.



The charity's **peer matching support model** continued to play a central role in its impact. Individuals were matched with peers based on shared symptoms, similar life stages, and comparable medication or treatment journeys. This tailored, lived-experience approach enabled more meaningful support relationships, particularly benefiting those newly diagnosed or experiencing progression or change in their condition.

## Awareness, Education and Advocacy

Throughout the year, Talks With MS delivered MS awareness and accessibility education through talks, panels, and community discussions. The charity supported individuals to navigate disclosure in workplaces, advocate for reasonable adjustments, and challenge stigma surrounding invisible symptoms. These activities contributed to wider understanding of MS and hidden disabilities among community partners, employers, and allies.

## The Empowerment Awards

A major milestone during the year was the curation of **The Empowerment Awards**, a disability-led awards programme designed to celebrate leadership, representation, and impact across the disability community. The awards were the **first of their kind** to include:

- An **Assistance Dogs category**, recognising the essential role of assistance animals in enabling independence, safety, and dignity
- An **Additional Needs Personality category**, celebrating individuals raising visibility and driving change for people with additional needs

The Empowerment Awards provided both a platform for recognition and a vehicle for fundraising and awareness aligned with the charity's mission.

## Wellbeing and Legacy Impact

While no overnight retreat was delivered during the 2024/2025 reporting period, the Trustees continue to see meaningful long-term impact from the charity's **overnight wellbeing retreat delivered in 2023**. Feedback from participants indicates lasting benefits in confidence, connection, and emotional wellbeing. Trustees remain committed to reintroducing similar restorative experiences in future years, subject to funding.

The charity also delivered **community-led fundraising activity**, including a **fundraising football match**, which raised awareness and generated unrestricted funds to support core services.

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## 5. Financial Review

For the year ended 31 January 2025:

- **Total Income:** £10,751.74
- **Total Expenditure:** £10,338.29

- The charity recorded a small operating surplus
- The charity holds **no debt** and is **not in any active repayment plans**
- The charity does **not hold any custodian funds**

The charity did **not receive any major funding** during this reporting period. Income was generated primarily through community fundraising, events, small grants, and individual donations. Trustees recognise the financial vulnerability of this income profile and continue to prioritise income diversification, partnership development, and sustainable funding strategies.

Reserves remain modest and are reviewed regularly to balance financial sustainability with the delivery of charitable activities.

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## 6. Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Trustees maintain an active risk register and review organisational risks on a regular basis. The principal risks identified during the year include:

### **Funding Risk:**

Reliance on small-scale fundraising and donations presents sustainability challenges. Trustees are mitigating this risk through funding strategy development, grant applications, and partnership outreach.

### **Operational Capacity Risk:**

Growing demand for community support places pressure on limited staff and volunteer capacity. Trustees manage this risk through prioritisation, partnership working, and ongoing review of delivery models.

### **Safeguarding Risk:**

As a disability-based charity working with vulnerable adults, safeguarding remains a critical responsibility. Robust safeguarding policies, reporting procedures, and trustee oversight are in place.

### **Reputational and Compliance Risk:**

Public-facing advocacy and fundraising activity require strong governance. Registration with the **Fundraising Regulator** and adherence to the Code of Fundraising Practice form part of the charity's mitigation strategy to protect public trust and reputation.

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## 7. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is embedded across all areas of the charity's work. Talks With MS maintains a Safeguarding Policy specifically designed for work with vulnerable adults, including people with disabilities and hidden conditions. Safeguarding procedures are applied across volunteering, speaker engagement, events, partnerships, and online community spaces.



Trustees receive safeguarding updates and provide active oversight to ensure safe, inclusive practice.

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## 8. Plans for Future Periods

In the coming year, Trustees will focus on strengthening the charity's sustainability and deepening impact. Priorities include expanding peer support and community reach; securing sustainable, multi-year funding; growing the scale and visibility of The Empowerment Awards; strengthening governance, risk management, and compliance frameworks; and embedding accessibility and inclusion across all activities and partnerships.

The charity will also continue to build on its registrations with the **Fundraising Regulator** and the **Sunflower Lanyard scheme** to strengthen trust, visibility of hidden disabilities, and ethical fundraising practice.

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## 9. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and UK accounting standards. They are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records, safeguarding the assets of the charity, and taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and irregularities.

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## 10. Approval

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf:

**Name:** Terri-Louise Brown

**Role:** Founder & Trustee

**Signature:** 

**Date:** 16/02/2026



## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	31/01/2024	To	31/01/2025
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### Section A Receipts and payments

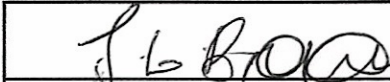
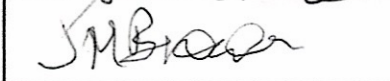
	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations, legacies and grants	5,180	-	-	5,180	12,349
Fundraising events, eg raffles, jumble sales	1,431	-	-	1,431	3,240
Community Event Tickets	1,539	-	-	1,539	1,514
Charitable activities	2,602	-	-	2,602	2,302
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>10,752</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,752</b>	<b>19,405</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>10,752</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,752</b>	<b>19,405</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Fundraising costs (trading activities)	435	-	-	435	780
Costs of charitable activities	1,672	-	-	1,672	4,987
Volunteer Expenses	1,500	-	-	1,500	2,542
Venue Hire	3,500	-	-	3,500	4,150
Subscriptions	312	-	-	312	1,009
Marketing - stationery, exhibitions	2,920	-	-	2,920	5,680
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>10,339</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,339</b>	<b>19,148</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>10,339</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,339</b>	<b>19,148</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>257</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>257</b>



Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	-	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Terri-Louise Brown	16/02/2026
	Joseph Brown	16/02/2026