



MS THERAPISTS EDUCATION FUND *Guidelines*

Background

Therapists, both specialist and generalist, play a pivotal role in improving the quality of life of people affected by MS. With the current financial constraints within the NHS it is very often difficult for therapists to get financial support to attend education courses to help with their professional development. This lack of financial support means that they can be working without the ability to develop their clinical expertise, evidence-based practice and management skills.

The MS Therapists Education Fund has been set up with equal investments from Biogen Idec Ltd, Bayer Schering Pharma, Merck Serono Ltd, Novartis, the MS Society and the MS Trust.

Purpose of the Fund

The purpose of the fund is to enable therapists to best meet the needs of people with MS by expanding their MS knowledge and skills, and to enable therapists to develop services in their locality. The fund is aimed primarily at physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and psychologists although applications from other therapists will be considered. Specifically it will enable those who are working in a clinical role with people with MS to attend academic courses, conferences, study days or masterclasses to develop their clinical expertise and expand their skills base.

Eligibility

All therapists who work with people with MS will be eligible to apply to the fund. Special consideration will be given to those working at a higher level of practice and to those working solely within the speciality of MS. Priority will be given to staff working within the NHS or social enterprises delivering services to the NHS. Where a person has a caseload which is not 100% MS this will be taken into consideration in assessing the level of the grant given.

Rules

- Applicants must submit a request to the fund using the specified grant application form that can be obtained from the MS Trust.
Forms can be downloaded from the website at:
http://www.mstrust.org.uk/professionals/downloads/therapist_bursary_fund_rules.pdf
- An up to date CV must be sent with the application form.
- A maximum of 75% of the cost of a course will be paid by the fund, although the precise percentage will depend on the decision of the independent adjudication committee.
- Evidence must be included within the application to show that the NHS or other possible funding sources have been approached before applying to the MS Therapists Education Fund.
- The provider of the balance of costs must be stated in the application.
- The grant will only be paid direct to the provider of the educational course.

- Once the grant has been paid, failure to attend the course will result in a requirement to refund the award.
- After completing an academic course a report is required outlining how the course met the learning objectives as specified on the application form. This report must be submitted within one month of the end of the course. Failure to do so may require re-payment of the grant.
- If a person applies for a subsequent award the total amount they have been allocated will be considered when assessing the level of the grant awarded. In particular grants made within the last two years will be assessed.
- The fund runs over a calendar year and is of a finite size. Once the monies have been allocated no further monies will be available in that calendar year.

Please return your application form to:

Nicola Russell
Director of Services
MS Trust
Spirella Building
Bridge Road
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 4ET

Tel : 01462 476700

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