

Multiple Sclerosis

Condition:

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a condition that affects the brain and spinal cord. In MS, the coating that protects the nerves, called myelin, is damaged. This causes a range of symptoms like blurred vision and problems with how people move, think and feel.

Once diagnosed, MS is a lifelong condition, but treatments and specialists can help to manage the condition and its symptoms.

More than 130,000 people in the UK have MS. In the UK people are most likely to find out they have MS in adulthood, but the first signs of MS often start earlier. Many people notice their first symptoms years before they get their diagnosis.

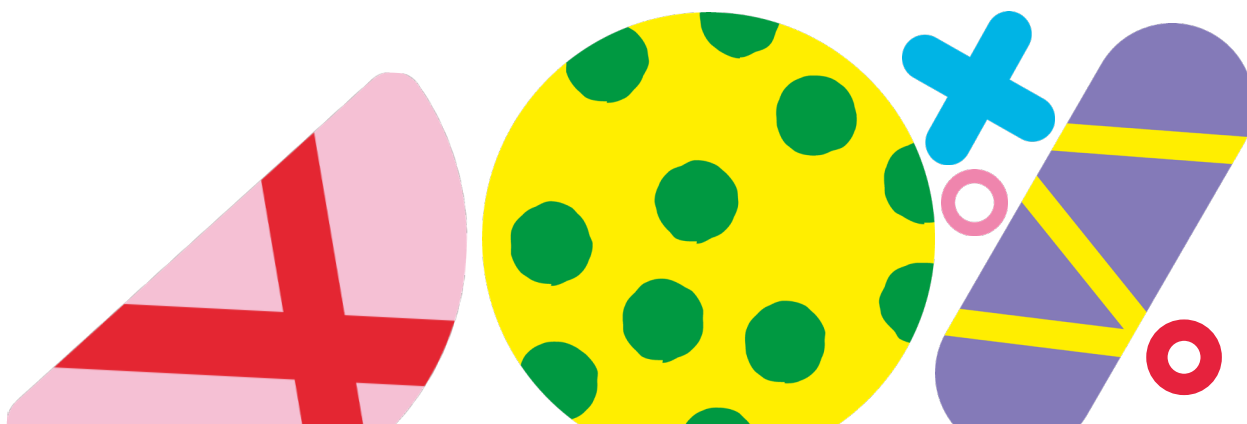
MS affects almost three times as many women as men. People from many different ethnic backgrounds can get MS.

Problem Areas:

- Some of the most common symptoms of multiple sclerosis include eye problems, numbness or tingling feelings (sometimes a bit like pins and needles), fatigue, pain.
- MS symptoms can come and go and change over time. They can be mild, or more severe.
- The symptoms of MS are caused by the immune system attacking the nerves in the brain or spinal cord by mistake. These nerves control lots of different parts of the body. That is why people can get MS symptoms in many parts of their body, and why everyone's MS is different.

Support strategies for your Group:

- Exercise can help manage common MS symptoms, like fatigue, muscle spasms or balance. Try some activity or exercise breaks during the programme.
- Ensure the right balance between activities and rest. This is known as 'pacing' or 'energy management'.
- If a young person's MS is giving them eye problems, for example, think about how to communicate with them using speech, and how they can participate in activities by using different senses to support their vision.





- If a young person's MS means they are fatigued, or their balance is affected, find roles/ways for them to be involved in games or activities that are less physically demanding e.g. 'scorer', 'referee' etc.
- Let young people communicate when they need to stop and rest and give them space to do this.

Further information:

MS Society <https://www.mssociety.org.uk>
MS-UK <https://www.ms-uk.org>

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'Invited to Belong' has been developed in partnership between Urban Saints and Youthscape.



Youthscape

www.urbansaints.org/invitedtobelong