

# WORK AND EMPLOYMENT



Multiple Sclerosis Society  
of SA & NT

The symptoms caused by MS can be widely differing, unpredictable and fluctuating. Some people find no need for any changes to their job or working pattern while others might gain immediate benefit from some adjustments.

Some of the symptoms experienced may only be temporary, while some may be long-term. The lack of certainty, coupled with the variety of different jobs that people do, can raise quite complex issues for people in the workplace. For example, fatigue is a common symptom of MS and stress can make symptoms feel worse. Similarly, some activities – such as travelling or standing all day – can be very tiring. Therefore, choosing a suitable job, or making appropriate adjustments, will be important.

## [How MS can affect your work life](#)

The references section at the end of this information sheet lists 2 publications from MS Australia

that present the facts and issue for you to consider as they affect your life at work.

It is important to remember that you are the same person the day after diagnosis as you were the day before. You have lost none of your skills and abilities. The likelihood is that you will be in the prime of life when you are diagnosed – just when you are of greatest value to employers. That said, your confidence may well have taken a knock.

Being diagnosed with MS can impact on several aspects of your life. Don't feel you have to rush into making decisions about your working life. Immediately after diagnosis or during a relapse may not be the best time for you to make such important decisions. For an employer, 'reliability' and 'quality' are likely to be major concerns. It makes more sense to continue to employ someone with a proven track record than recruit new staff. Your employer may well have already invested

considerable resources in your development. From a business point of view, it does not make sense to throw your skills away – and then to pay out more to recruit a replacement.

Most employers today are keen to show themselves as sensitive to the needs of their staff and are committed to equal opportunities – this is known to appeal to both staff and customers.

### **Financial support**

If your MS is affecting your ability to work, or affecting how many hours you work, then you should

consult a financial adviser for professional advice about income support options.

You may also be eligible for Pensions, Allowances or programs through Centrelink. Their website details are in the references section.

The Government also provides support for workplace modifications that may assist you to stay longer in your workplace, or make working life easier.

Centrelink can provide advice on programs and services available.

### **If you are interested in more information**

The Society has more information sheets included in the Managing MS Series as well as a Symptoms series and a Healthy Living series. Please see the website for more details.

### **References**

#### **MS Australia**

Advocacy services <http://www.msaustralia.org.au/advocacy-employment.asp>

Work and employment <http://www.msaustralia.org.au/livingwithms-employment.asp>

MS and employment Frequently asked questions

<http://www.msaustralia.org.au/documents/ms-employment-faqs.pdf>

<http://www.msra.org.au/>

#### **Centrelink**

<http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/home/index.htm>

#### **Australian Securities and Investments Commission**

How to choose a financial adviser

<http://www.moneysmart.gov.au/?referrer=fido.gov.au&openDocument>

## **MS International Federation (MSIF)**

MS in Focus Issue 16 Employment and MS

[http://www.msif.org/en/resources/msif\\_resources/msif\\_publications/ms\\_in\\_focus/index.html](http://www.msif.org/en/resources/msif_resources/msif_publications/ms_in_focus/index.html)

There are many other references from overseas, however you should be aware that their legislation and social services are different to those applicable in Australia.

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