Answers to common questions

A guide for Marie Curie Volunteers in Fundraising

Marie Curie is a registered charity in England and Wales (207994) and Scotland (SC038731).
Registered as a company limited by guarantee in England & Wales (507597).
Registered Office: One Embassy Gardens, 8 Viaduct Gardens, London, SW11 7BW.

How to use this guide

This guide is designed to help you answer some of the most common questions you might be asked at a talk or fundraising event in your role. The answers here include general information and give a national overview.

We know that there'll also be some local variations that you will need to be aware of, so do check in with your Community Fundraiser for anything you need to know locally.

If you get asked a question that's not in the guide or you're unsure how to answer it, don't worry. We don't expect you to be able to answer every question. You can either say that you'll find out for them and get back to them or direct the person asking to your Community Fundraiser.

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General questions

What does Marie Curie do?

Marie Curie is the UK's leading end of life charity. We provide expert care and support to people living with any terminal illness and to the people close to them across all four nations.

Our Nurses, healthcare assistants and hospice teams provide care at home, in hospices and in the community. We also offer a free Support Line, practical information, bereavement support, and volunteer services.

There is only one chance to give someone a good end of life experience. Alongside caring for people directly, we also fund research, campaign for better end of life care, and work to ensure everyone can get the support they need at the end of life.

Why does Marie Curie need my support?

Everything Marie Curie does relies on public support and their generosity.

While around one-third of our care is funded by the NHS, the remaining two-thirds of the money we spend each year comes from donations, fundraising, gifts in Wills, trusts and companies.

The kind spirited nature of supporters helps us provide expert care, information and support to people facing one of the most difficult times in their lives. Without them, we would not be able to provide vital and care and support to terminally ill people and their loved ones.

Who was Marie Curie?

Marie Curie was a pioneering scientist and the first person to win two Nobel Prizes.

She is best known for her discoveries in the field of radioactivity, which helped transform medicine and cancer treatment.

Although the charity is named after Marie Curie, our work focuses on providing care and support for people living with a terminal illness and those close to them.

Why is the charity named after Marie Curie?

The charity's roots go back to the Marie Curie Hospital in London, which opened in 1930.

Over time, a charitable organisation developed alongside the hospital to support people at the end of life. Today, Marie Curie has grown into a national charity supporting anyone living with a terminal illness, whatever their diagnosis.

How did the charity come about?

Marie Curie was founded in 1948, the same year as the NHS.

It was originally focused on supporting people with cancer at the end of life. The charity now cares for people living with any terminal illness, including conditions such as heart disease, dementia, neurological illnesses and cancer.

Why daffodils?

The daffodil has been a symbol of Marie Curie since our first Great Daffodil Appeal in Scotland in 1986.

Daffodils bloom in spring and represent hope, compassion and new beginnings. Today, they are recognised across the UK as a symbol of support for people living with a terminal illness and their families.

How can I get involved in the Great Daffodil Appeal?

There are lots of ways to get involved:

- Donate and wear a daffodil during the appeal.
- Volunteer at a local collection.
- Organise a fundraising event.
- Encourage friends, family or colleagues to take part.
- Support local Marie Curie fundraising activities.

For more information, visit the Marie Curie website – www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil

What's the difference between Marie Curie and Macmillan?

Both organisations support people affected by serious illness, but they have different areas of expertise.

Marie Curie specialises in end of life care and support for people living with any terminal illness.

Macmillan Cancer Support focuses on supporting people living with cancer from diagnosis onwards.

Many people may receive support from both organisations at different points in their journey.

I'd like to support Marie Curie as a volunteer – how can I get involved?

We have a variety of flexible volunteer opportunities on offer, that can fit around your interests and other commitments.

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Whether you're interested in volunteering in your nearest Marie Curie store, you'd like to offer companionship to someone living with a terminal illness, or you'd like to help support fundraising activities in your local community, we'd love you to join our team. You can find out more by visiting our website Volunteer at Marie Curie | Marie Curie.

Questions about Marie Curie services

Why is there no Marie Curie nursing in my area?

Marie Curie services are planned and funded in partnership with the NHS and local health organisations.

This means services can vary from one area to another. In some locations, funding arrangements or local decisions may mean a Marie Curie service is not available.

Across the UK, Marie Curie continues to work with partners to improve access to high-quality end of life care and support.

If pressed:

Funding shortfalls and changes in what the local commissioners choose to fund have meant that some services have unfortunately been withdrawn as our contracts have been discontinued. In some areas, we've had to make the difficult decision to step away from services that were no longer financially sustainable for us to run.

In some cases, commissioners may choose an alternative provider to Marie Curie. This may be due to other providers charging less for their services as their staff may be less specialist or on lower pay. Unfortunately, this can mean services are downgraded, impacting the level of care patients will receive.

This problem isn't unique to Marie Curie, many other charitable hospice and palliative care providers are facing similar challenges with funding. Hospice UK found that nearly six in ten hospices have made or are considering frontline cuts due to a lack of sustainable funding.

How can I get a Marie Curie Nurse / support from Marie Curie?

People can access Marie Curie support in several ways.

A GP, hospital team or district nurse may be able to make a referral to local Marie Curie services where these are available.

Anyone can also contact the free Marie Curie Support Line for information, practical guidance and emotional support. **Support Line:** 0800 090 2309 or www.mariecurie.org.uk/services/support-line

Are there any plans to open new hospices?

There are currently no plans to open new hospices.

Instead, Marie Curie is focused on reaching more people through partnerships, community-based services and innovative models of care.

This includes:

- Expanding Hospice Care at Home services.
- Supporting people through hospital and community-based teams.
- Growing our Companion volunteer service.
- Investing in research and innovation.
- Working with governments and the NHS to improve end of life care.

If pressed:

If you would like to learn more about our strategy, you can visit https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/about-us/our-strategy

Does Marie Curie work with any other providers of care for people living with a terminal illness?

Yes.

Marie Curie works closely with the NHS, local health and care organisations, hospices and charities across the UK to help ensure people receive the best possible support at the end of life.

Partners may include organisations such as Age UK, Alzheimer's Society and Macmillan Cancer Support.

What are the Daffodil Standards for GPs?

The Daffodil Standards are a set of free resources developed by Marie Curie and the Royal College of General Practitioners.

The Daffodil Standards offer guidance, online tools and resources, and help GP practices identify patients in need of support early on. Knowing patients' needs and wishes helps GPs provide high-quality care for people living with serious illness and approaching the end of life.

Similar standards have also been developed with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society for community pharmacies to help offer the best end of life care for patients.

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What's the Companion service?

Marie Curie Companions are trained volunteers who provide practical and emotional support to people living with a terminal illness and those close to them.

This might include:

- Offering companionship and conversation.
- Helping people stay connected to their communities.
- Accompanying people to appointments.
- Giving family members and carers some time to rest.

Support can be provided at home, over the phone and in some hospital settings.

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Questions about Marie Curie's research

How much does Marie Curie spend on research?

Marie Curie is the UK's largest charitable funder of palliative and end of life care research.

We currently invest around £3 million each year into research that aims to improve the experience of people living with terminal illness and those important to them.

The area is underfunded. Of the £2.8bn of non-commercial healthcare funding, only £6.5m goes to palliative and end of life care research.

What do you carry out research on?

Marie Curie funds research into many aspects of palliative and end of life care.

Current priorities include:

- Improving care for people living with dementia.
- Supporting family carers.
- Improving experiences in hospitals and communities.
- Reducing avoidable hospital admissions.
- Understanding what good end of life care looks like for different groups of people.

The goal is to ensure that everyone receives the best possible care and support at the end of life.

If asked about examples:

Recent examples include the are the refresh of the Palliative and end of life care Priority Setting Partnership with the James Lind Alliance to improving palliative and end if life care experiences for people living with dementia.
Funding five new dementia-focused research projects as a part of our last research funding scheme, in equal partnership with Alzheimer's Society. These projects aim to develop practical tools, training, and guidelines, improving homecare support, empowering carers, reducing unnecessary hospital admissions, and addressing unique care needs of rare dementias.

Our current Research Grants Scheme aims to fund research projects focusing on improving the quality of care and discharge processes in hospitals for people with palliative and end of life care needs.

What's the charity's position on assisted dying / suicide?

Marie Curie is **neutral** on assisted dying and does not campaign either for or against a change in the law.

However, we strongly believe everyone should have access to high-quality end of life care and the support they need at the end of life.

If people would like to know more about this position, we encourage them to read information published on the Marie Curie website, or read this blog written by our CEO Matthew Reed.

Questions about Marie Curie's funding

Does the NHS contribute to our services?

Yes.

Marie Curie works in partnership with the NHS and local authorities, which contribute towards the cost of many of our services.

However, public funding does not cover all our costs, which is why fundraising and donations remain so important.

On average in 2024/25, the NHS paid for 34% of the cost of Marie Curie's hospices and 47% of the cost of Marie Curie's nursing services, with the remainder of the costs funded by our generous supporters.

Can I pay for a Marie Curie Nurse?

No.

Marie Curie nursing and hospice services are provided free of charge to patients and families where services are available and eligibility criteria are met. All our services are commissioned by the NHS or local councils.

People should speak to their GP, district nurse or healthcare team about what support may be available.

If we raise more money, would Marie Curie be able to set up a nursing service in the area?

Local fundraising makes an enormous difference to Marie Curie's work, but decisions about where healthcare services operate are made in partnership with the NHS and local commissioners.

We rely heavily on fundraised income to meet the full cost of delivering our services. If a service is withdrawn, the money from commissioners that funds part of the service will end as it is not financially sustainable or possible for Marie Curie to continue running a service without support from the NHS.

Because our services are delivered alongside the NHS, fundraising alone cannot determine where services are provided.

Unfortunately, additional local fundraising will not get a service up and running again, if the commissioners have chosen to withdraw it.

Questions about donations

How can I leave a donation in my Will?

Leaving a gift in a Will is a powerful way to help people living with a terminal illness in the future.

Anyone interested can find more information through Marie Curie's free Will-writing services or speak to our Supporter Relations Team.

For details, visit the Marie Curie website or contact our Supporter Relations Team on **0800 716 146**.

Why can't I keep my donation or direct debit within my local area?

Most donations are used where the need is greatest across the UK, helping Marie Curie provide care and support wherever it is needed the most.

However, we do have a small number of campaigns where public donations are spent in specific ways (e.g. Sponsor a Nurse). For these, your donation will automatically be allocated.

In some circumstances, supporters can ask for their donation to support a particular area or service. Marie Curie's Supporter Relations Team can provide more information – supporter.relations@mariecurie.org.uk

Please note, if you're donating to us through a regular donation such as a direct debit or standing order, unless it's for our Sponsor a Nurse campaign, we'll be unable to restrict your donation. Likewise, we can't restrict online donations e.g. through JustGiving.

Questions about how Marie Curie spends money

How much does Marie Curie spend on charitable activities?

In 2024/25, Marie Curie spent **£133.2 million** on charitable activities.

This included:

- Providing care and support services.

- Funding research.
- Delivering information and support.
- Campaigning for better end of life care.
- Raising awareness of terminal illness and palliative care.

How much does the charity spend on administration costs?

Like all charities, Marie Curie needs systems, staff and fundraising activities to support its work.

Investing in fundraising helps generate future income that funds care and support services. These costs are carefully reviewed to ensure they deliver value and help the charity reach more people in need.

If asked:

In 2024/25, we spent £23.8 million on the support costs that enable us to raise funds and fund our charitable activities.

Why does the Marie Curie Chief Executive get paid so much? / How much does your Chief Executive earn?

Marie Curie's Chief Executive leads a large national charity that provides healthcare services, funds research and supports thousands of people every year.

Senior salaries are set by the Board of Trustees and are regularly compared with similar organisations to ensure they are appropriate. Details are published in Marie Curie's Annual Report and Accounts.

If asked:

The salary of the Chief Executive in 2024/25 was £197,600 (no increase from 2023/24). Details of the remuneration of higher paid staff is published in our annual report.

What's the charity's position on financial reserves?

Like other charities, Marie Curie keeps financial reserves to help ensure services can continue if income falls unexpectedly or costs increase.

Having reserves helps protect vital hospice, nursing and support services so that people can continue to rely on them when they need them most.

If asked:

To fund our services, we rely on several fluctuating income streams from donations, legacies, shop profits and investment income.

To enable us to make commitments to each community to provide its key hospice and nursing services, we need to maintain a level of free reserves so that we can continue our operations in the event of an unforeseen shortfall in voluntary income or increase in costs. This is known as our target reserves.

The Trustees calculate the amount that is required to be held in target reserves based on the assessment of the risks affecting the income and expenditure of the Charity on an annual basis.

Helpful reminder for speakers

You are not expected to know every answer.

If you're unsure, a useful response is:

"That's a great question. I don't want to give you inaccurate information, so I'd encourage you to contact Marie Curie directly or visit the website where you'll find the most up-to-date information."

This helps ensure people receive accurate information while keeping conversations positive and engaging.

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