

THE ME ASSOCIATION



ME CONNECT

The Support and Information Service

INTRODUCTION

Neil Riley (Chairman of the ME Association) comments:



“When you are ill with a chronic condition like PVFS, ME/CFS or Long Covid, there are many things you want to know. What treatments

work, where can I find a doctor who understands me, where can I get reliable information to complete my benefits claim?

“It can be even more important to make contact with another person, someone who understands how these medical conditions affect everyday life and the many challenges they bring. Someone who will listen without judgment.

“The purpose of ME Connect is simple. It is here to support people affected by PVFS, ME/CFS, and Long Covid to help them make informed choices. It is here to listen, to validate, and empathise with any issues they might be facing.



“Every year, ME Connect does this for thousands of people. Of all the services the charity provides, it is ME Connect of which I am most proud. It is what I feel a charity should be all about; giving help to those who need it at a difficult time in their lives.

“Staff and volunteers provide this service every day. Why? Because they want to help. They want to give something back to people who are in a worse situation than they are. They want to make a contribution, and it can be a very rewarding experience.”

THE TELEPHONE HELPLINE

Hilary Briars (Manager of ME Connect) comments:

“I am very proud of the fact that the helpline takes thousands of calls each year and I'm equally proud of the volunteers who respond to these calls.

“We are all really pleased to be able to help so many people with PVFS, ME/CFS, and Long Covid and those who care for them.

**CONTACT ME
CONNECT BY PHONE,
EMAIL OR SOCIAL
MEDIA PRIVATE
MESSAGE**



0344 576 5326

10am-12 noon

**2pm-4pm, 7pm-9pm
every day of the year**



**meconnect@
meassociation.org.uk**



**facebook.com/
meassociation**



twitter.com/MEAssociation



**instagram.com/
meassociation**

“With expert information to hand, a good understanding of the impact these conditions can have, and by being available every day of the year, we provide a unique and tailored service that really helps.”

“Thank you, you have been an absolute angel.”

Sue Mayes (Senior Volunteer) comments:

“We might hear from people who want general information, or who are anxious about their symptoms. They might already have a diagnosis and want more information about their illness.

“Callers may be in a muddle with claiming benefits or they may be worrying about their child and the effect on schooling. They may just need someone they can talk to, who can listen and who understands.

We sometimes find that an empathetic understanding after months of consternation can bring tears of gratitude. Often a call will end with a gentle joke and some laughter, something that can be missing from their lives.”

EMAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

Russell Fleming (Communications Manager) comments:

“ME Connect is about delivering an accessible, professional, and personalised service to people in need. I think we do this very well. Indeed, throughout the pandemic and in 2022/23 we have seen much growth in the number of people seeking support and information. This has led to the charity investing additional resource in the service.

Email and social media private messaging provide a different but similar service to the helpline. We want to offer ME Connect to as



“Thank you so much for giving up your time to work on this Helpline. It is just so nice to speak to someone who really understands what I am going through.”

many as we can and people have responded positively. We now receive almost as many emails and messages as the helpline receives phone calls. And, like the helpline, all replies are tailored to the individual, are confidential, and we all receive the same level of training.

It is a great honour to help people who are often in desperate situations and from the responses we receive, I know the service is appreciated. We're here for you!”



We are proud members of The Helpline Partnership

The Partnership is committed to supporting organisations that provide non-face-to-face advice, support and information to improve general wellbeing and has been doing so for over 20 years. They champion the interests of their members and help them to build sustainability and deliver the best service they can for their users.

“It is really good that you offer this service, it is such a relief to speak to someone who understands.”

“I have worried about this problem for weeks but within five minutes you have given me the answer, thank you .”



MEA MEMBERSHIP

For a very reasonable subscription, you can help us to support even more people with PVFS, ME/CFS, and Long Covid.

Become a member and we will keep you updated with the latest news, research, and stories in the excellent and exclusive ME Essential magazine.

Your subscription can help us to make the UK a better place for people with these devastating conditions.

We put the interest of members at the heart of everything we do: changing attitudes and improving lives!

- £18.00 (UK residents and BFPO)
- £24.00 (Mainland Europe including Republic of Ireland)
- £30.00 (Rest of the World)

Every full member can vote at the Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings.

To become a member please visit: <https://meassociation.org.uk/about-the-mea/membership>

All communications are treated in the strictest of confidence. Please check your phone contract for charging details if you intend calling the Telephone Helpline. Calls cost the same as other standard landline numbers (starting 01 or 02). If you have a call package for your landline or mobile phone, then calls will normally come out of your inclusive minutes.

