

**HOW WE
WILL SURVIVE
THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC
AND PROSPER
BEYOND IT**

STATEMENT BY THE TRUSTEES, MAY 2020

The logo for the Samson Centre for MS. It features the word "samson" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. Above the letter "a" is a white outline of a house roof. Below "samson" is the text "centre for MS" in a smaller, white, lowercase, sans-serif font.
samson
centre for MS



WHAT WE DO

OUR ROLE



The Samson Centre for MS, a Guildford-based charity, was founded by people with multiple sclerosis (MS) and exists to help people with MS live the best life they can. It does this by delivering essential therapies and support that are not available on the NHS.

The Samson Centre is entirely self-funding and receives no money from central or local government. Around 40% of our £280,000 annual running costs are met from members' contributions, with the balance raised from donations by the public and grant-making organisations.

12,500 physiotherapy, exercise and oxygen therapy sessions are delivered annually to our members.

When space permits, the Samson Centre also offers oxygen therapy to people with other conditions such as cancer and strokes. The Samson Centre employs twelve part-time staff and has around 30 dedicated volunteers.

40%

OF ANNUAL RUNNING COSTS ARE MET FROM MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

12,500

PHYSIOTHERAPY, EXERCISE AND OXYGEN THERAPY SESSIONS ARE DELIVERED ANNUALLY

12 PART-TIME STAFF

30 DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE SAMSON CENTRE



As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Samson Centre has had to close its doors and is not currently able to offer any direct therapy to members.

We are however providing information, support and online classes for members to help them exercise at home, as well as regularly telephoning our members with priority calls to the most vulnerable ones. Online video chats also allow members to continue supporting each other, an important role of the Centre.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also meant that many of the fundraising activities we rely on for our financing such as golf days, street collections and sponsored events are not taking place, leaving us with a substantial and immediate funding gap.

Without regular physio, exercise and oxygen therapy, the health of our members will inevitably suffer. This makes us all the more determined as an organisation to survive the current pandemic and to be ready and able to resume our regular therapies and support as soon as circumstances permit.

ONLINE
CLASSES FOR MEMBERS
TO HELP THEM EXERCISE
AT HOME

**SUBSTANTIAL
& IMMEDIATE
FUNDING
GAP**

HEALTH
OF OUR MEMBERS
WILL INEVITABLY
SUFFER



OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19



As and when the current situation improves and we are able to re-open our doors, we intend to be in a situation where we can immediately resume providing our regular therapies, in premises that are safe for our members, staff and volunteers to attend.

This will involve us achieving the following:

- Remaining financially solvent for the duration of the crisis;
- Retaining the services of our highly trained and dedicated employees and volunteers;
- Ensuring that our premises, plant and equipment remain secure and fit for purpose;
- Raising and retaining sufficient funding to see us through the early months of re-opening, when the government support we have been receiving will have ceased.

In order to meet these objectives, we have:


- Furloughed all of our staff other than a core team of our Centre Manager, our Lead Physiotherapist and our Fundraiser;
- Developed a cash flow model that monitors our cash position over the coming months and allows us to evaluate our ability (or not) to top up furloughed staff salaries, pay our core team and fixed costs and retain the cash buffer we will need when resuming our regular activities;
- Fully shut down our premises to conserve costs, with our core team working from home;
- Agreed with our insurers the steps we need to take to ensure that our premises, plant and equipment remain safe and covered by our insurance;
- Set up weekly trustee board conference calls to review and manage our position and support the Centre Manager.

We have applied for and received financial support from the government's Job Retention Scheme for our furloughed staff. We have also taken the decision to top up the salaries of furloughed staff to 100% to end-June 2020. If the Job Retention Scheme is extended, further top ups will be kept under review. We consider these top ups to be critical to retaining the services of our highly specialised staff, who might otherwise be forced by their circumstances to find alternative employment.



OPERATIONS

DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



We have chosen to continue to pay our **Centre Manager**, **Lead Physiotherapist** and **Fundraiser**. This is the minimum team we believe we need in order both to operate services now and survive into the future.

Our **Lead Physiotherapist** is providing information, online classes and maintaining regular contact with members. If it becomes possible to re-engage one of our other physiotherapists to provide further on-going support to members, we will seek to do so.

We have chosen to continue paying our **Fundraiser**, as continued access to funds and profile raising is vital for the survival of the Samson Centre, both now and in the future.

We will also continue to pay our **Centre Manager**, without whom the Samson Centre cannot function. While the Centre remains closed, the Centre Manager will guide, supervise and support the work of the Lead Physiotherapist and Fundraiser, liaise with our volunteers, members and the public, perform ongoing Centre administration, carry out the wishes of the trustee board and generally act as the public face of the Centre.

LEAD PHYSIOTHERAPIST

PROVIDING INFORMATION,
ONLINE CLASSES AND
MAINTAINING REGULAR
CONTACT WITH MEMBERS

FUNDRAISER

ACCESS TO FUNDS AND
PROFILE RAISING

CENTRE MANAGER

WILL GUIDE, SUPERVISE
AND SUPPORT



RE-OPENING

THE CENTRE



As soon as it is deemed safe to re-open our Centre and resume operations, we intend to do so. In deciding when it is safe, we will be guided among other things by advice from the government, the MS National Therapy Centres and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists.

Re-starting operations is likely to be done in stages, as some members may be reticent to return until the premises are demonstrably safe for them to be in, due to underlying health conditions. We will also need to inspect and test equipment such as our oxygen facilities to verify they are functional, and ensure that we have sustainable supplies of oxygen.

We have already started planning for our re-opening. This is a complex operation, and our focus will be on the safety of members, staff, volunteers and other users of our premises. As part of this process, we will seek the views and engagement of our members.

The task is complicated by the fact that there are several organisations that share use of our premises, the Guildford Waterside Centre. We have already commenced discussions with other major Waterside Centre users, with a view to agreeing how we can all use the building in a safe way. Due to the good relations maintained between the various users, the Samson Centre trustees are confident that a workable solution will be found quickly.

SUMMARY

We believe that the steps we have taken will, together with the generous assistance of donors, assure the continued operation of the Samson Centre during the Covid-19 pandemic and its survival thereafter. This will allow it to continue to provide essential services and support to those living with MS in our area.

If you would like to support the Samson Centre during this time of crisis, please visit us on www.samsoncentre.org.uk to see the various ways you can donate money, or contact us on info@samsoncentre.org.uk

Thank you.

samson
centre for MS



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