

## **A request for you to help us help you, and/or others in your position**

Dear non-MS member,

It is with some regret that I must inform you that the Hyperbaric Oxygen (HBO) facility at the Centre is now closed to new admissions, other than for those suffering from MS.

To help you understand our situation:

Our new membership in 2015 totalled 147 people, which was a major increase on our previous annual rate of intake.

Of these only 40% were people affected by MS, with the remaining 60% being non-MS.

This is clearly unsustainable, and at odds with our MS charitable objectives.

As a result of ongoing increasing membership the HBO chamber has been the subject of increasing demand and we have now reached the point where we feel that we must focus on our Core constituency i.e. MS, as we are, first and foremost an MS charity (& registered as such).

We only have finite resources: the chamber only has 5 seats; we have a limited number of Volunteers to operate it (& it's only Volunteers who do so); and limited staff numbers (2 full time operations staff, covering our full service provision M-F 9-5).

We believe that you, your friends, or family, might be able to help restore access/help to non-MS users, but we would need more Volunteers to make this possible.

Our current thinking is that with enough extra Volunteers, whom we would train to operate the chamber, that extra sessions could be run to meet the non-MS demand, as independently as possible from the Centre.

We would expect these to run either at 3pm, or in the evening, or at the weekend, just like the MS dives that operate successfully on a Tuesday evening, and on a Saturday. These are organised independently by specific Volunteers with minimal/no assistance from our staff, to meet the needs of some working MS members.

We are also looking for Volunteers to help with just about any and all areas of our operation, but the priority, if we are to reopen our facility to people in circumstances like yours, is for HBO chamber operators.

Please let Penny or Hilary know how you may be able to help others to benefit from access to our Hyperbaric Oxygen chamber. Quite bluntly: if we don't get the help from you and yours, then we won't be able to help people in your situation.

Also, if we don't get additional help, and with our aim to increase MS usage, we cannot rule out having to review/limit existing non-MS access to the chamber, at some point in the future.

Please do what you can to help. It's in everyone's best interests.

Derek Aitken (Chairman of the Board of Trustees)

4 June 2016