**1. Who is the ME Trust?**

[The ME Trust](https://metrust.org.uk/) is a UK charity that offers individually tailored whole-person care to people with M.E., including access to doctors, nurses, physios, counsellors and chaplains. As well as listening and caring for the needs of the whole person, the charity offers encouragement and support to families and their immediate community of carers.

**2. Who is Action for M.E?**

[Action for M.E.](http://www.actionforme.org.uk) takes action to end the ignorance, injustice and neglect faced by people with M.E. Along with providing information, support and advice to people to help improve their health and wellbeing, Action for M.E. works with professionals to enhance the care and support that people with M.E. receive and funds pilot research projects to advance knowledge of the illness.

**3. Why are the ME Trust and Action for M.E. proceeding with a merger?**

The Board of Trustees of both charities have decided to take this course of action because they wholeheartedly believe that it will benefit children, young people, adults and families affected by M.E.

We are frustrated by the considerable lack of healthcare provision for people with M.E., with significant gaps around the country resulting in a postcode lottery for access to specialist services and huge variability between them. There is simply not enough healthcare support for children and adults with M.E. now, let alone with an increase in diagnoses following Covid-19. In response, following a thorough process of due diligence and consultation with our stakeholders, the Board of Trustees have agreed to proceed with the merger with the ME Trust.

This merger will allow us to combine the power of our organisations and both integrate and strengthen the services we offer to people with M.E. We will seek to scale up the current holistic health and wellbeing support currently delivered by both organisations.

**4. What are the timescales for the merger?**

A final decision to merge was taken by both Boards of Trustees on 16 September 2021. We now anticipate merging both charities and launching our combined service offer in late November/early December. We will continue to keep our website updated with further information about the merger, including timescales.

**6. What will the new merged charity be called?**

The merged charity will continue to be known as Action for M.E. Action for M.E. will continue to deliver its existing Information, Support & Advocacy Service to people affected by M.E. The services currently offered by the ME Trust will be delivered by Action for M.E. Healthcare Services when the two organisations merge.

**7. Who will be CEO of the merged charity?**

Sonya Chowdhury will remain the CEO of Action for M.E. from the point of merger. Helen Winning (CEO of The ME Trust) will join the Action for M.E. team in a new role as Director of Healthcare Services.

**8. Where should children and young people, and their parents and carers, now go to access information, advice and support?**

Action for M.E. and The ME Trust will continue to deliver their individual services until the point of merger.

You can access Action for M.E. services by visiting their [website](https://www.actionforme.org.uk/), emailing questions@actionforme.org.uk or by calling 0117 927 9551.

Action for M.E. services operate from Monday – Friday, 10am – 4:30pm.

You can access The M.E. Trust services by visiting their website, emailing info@metrust.org.uk or by calling 0208 706 0036.

**9. Where can I find more information?**

We will continue to update our websites with information about the merger, including any revision to the planned timescales.

You can also contact Action for M.E. by email, phone or letter. You can find contact details at [www.actionforme.org.uk/contact](http://www.actionforme.org.uk/contact).

**10. Will there be any change to the clinical services offered by The ME Trust?**

The ME Trust will continue to offer the same whole-person care as they do now. The merger will not affect treatment of current patients in any way. Patients will still receive the same services from the multi-disciplinary healthcare team, and all members of the term are transferring their contracts to work for the new organisation. In the future, having a more stable infrastructure and financial base means that we plan to scale up the services and recruit more healthcare professionals to join the team.

**11. Why does The ME Trust charge for Healthcare Services?**

The ME Trust currently charges for its healthcare services because they pay fees to the healthcare professionals – the doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, counsellors and chaplains providing the services. The fees are subsidised through fundraising activities to make them affordable. Bursaries of up to 50% of the fees are offered to people who are in receipt of benefits or in financial hardship, to enable as many people as possible to access the services they need.

**12. Why did you choose this M.E. charity to merge with, and not a different one?**

The ME Trust and Action for M.E. have worked closely together for a number of years. Each charity offers unique services to the M.E. community that we believe could be strengthened further through a merger, enabling people with M.E. to access holistic, person-centred services through a single, merged organisation.

**13. Were supporting members of Action for M.E. and stakeholders of The ME Trust consulted about this decision?**

When the decision was taken on 4 August to explore a merger with The ME Trust, Action for M.E. contacted their supporting members with details of the decision and encouraged comments and questions. They also contacted stakeholders including existing service users, volunteers and donors and invited feedback. Feedback regarding the decision to explore a merger with The ME Trust has been overwhelmingly positive.

At the same time, The ME Trust contacted patients and donors with details of the decision and invited comments. Again, feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Action for M.E. launched an online consultation (promoted widely through social media networks) on 7 September 2021 to gather further feedback from the wider M.E. community about their decision to explore a merger. The feedback received has helped inform the final decision to proceed with a merger.

**There will be an online Q&A webinar with Sonya Chowdhury (CEO, Action for M.E.) and Helen Winning (CEO, The M.E. Trust) on 21 September at 2pm where we will answer further questions about the decision to merge. You can sign up to join the webinar** [**here**](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_gDKCZ2VBTiGCtPRAJ-t5mQ)**.**