



# Annual Review 2011/12

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# 2011-12: Laying the foundations for change

I want to take the opportunity of the publication of this review of 2011/12 to thank all the wonderful people who have both welcomed me and given up so much time since I joined MRS at the end of November 2011. Special thanks to Rita Clifton (President), Rowland Lloyd (Vice President) and Vanella Jackson (Chair) and all the MRS Council for their hard work and support. A full list of officers and Council together with their responsibilities can be found at the end of this publication. I would also like to acknowledge the very hard work of the staff in what has been a challenging year in so many ways.

I have picked out just a few of the highlights contained within this report. Traffic to the Research Live website grew by 40% and we topped the list of the '100 most re-tweeted' within the research sector (see page 8). Our Company Partner members continued to rise (page 7) and, very encouragingly, the number of candidates for the Advanced Certificate was up 30% (page 6). I am equally pleased that the conference team delivered even more high-quality and pertinent events this year, and organised an Annual Conference that saw overall satisfaction achieve 88%, up significantly on the previous year (page 8). We were also busy delivering nine revised guidelines (page 4) and dealing with over 8,000 calls to the MRS Freephone validation service (page 9). In spite of all this we managed to keep our financial commitments to you.

In my first few months I have been struck by the incredible people I have met. But when considering this, I can't help wondering why I didn't meet these people when I was a client. In a professional capacity, I enjoyed my first MRS Annual Conference. It was very lively and I learned a huge amount in a very short space of time. There were over 600 people there and again I ask myself a similar question: *why didn't I get to go to that as a client?* Bringing more clients into the MRS network will be a focus for the Society in the year to come.

## New identity, new energy

I'm really pleased about the launch of the new MRS brand identity, and it has been very well received by our members and the broader community. One of the things I heard when I went round the country talking to members was that they wanted to have greater access to what was going on in London.

We did spend quite a lot of time and effort last year building up our technology. It's important that MRS uses it to create better access for its membership – for the standards and advice, for the training and other benefits that MRS can offer, wherever they are located



Will Armitage

## The case for quality

Standards continue to matter and an important role for MRS is making that case very clearly. But we need to make it constructively; nobody wants to engage in a negative debate. MRS's job is to make a case for the benefits of quality in research.

We do need to continue our significant work with both Westminster and Brussels to make sure that regulations don't make it harder for researchers to do their job: gathering the evidence that is vital in developing today's business and society. There are a lot of regulations in the pipeline, and we will have to continue to engage heavily over the coming year.

## Supporting growth

One of the things that I'm quite clear MRS needs to do to help the market grow is to widen access to research, in non-traditional sectors at home and also internationally. MRS supported the establishment of the Global Business Research Network; its first meeting was at our annual conference. We're hoping to see more access to international markets through channels like this.

I also think we need to showcase research and build its credibility, particularly with government, as a major revenue generator for UK plc both at home and as an export. We need to stand up for ourselves and not just rest in the shadow of the creative industries.

Of course there is always more we could and should be doing, but I hope you will feel that MRS is clearly on its way to becoming the modern, open and collaborative organisation that it set out to be this time last year. So my final thanks go to you, our members, who by your subscriptions, professional contributions and engagement support MRS in achieving its ambitions. We will need all of that support next year as we seek to build on this work and widen the footprint of research in the UK and beyond.

- Watch an interview with Jane discussing how MRS can support the growth of the research and the evidence sector at [www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk)

## A new, clear voice

In 2011/12 the policy agenda has been dominated both in the UK and the EU by proposals to revise the data protection framework which provided the legal underpinning of the business of research.

Many of the concerns expressed by regulators and legislators relate to the use of personal data in advertising and marketing. So while research is not the focus of attention, some of the solutions proposed may have unintended negative consequences for our sector, requiring constant vigilance and timely intervention.

It is not sufficient however to simply define research as 'not marketing'. Research needs a clear voice and an identity as a creative force for change in commerce and society.

In 2012/13 the new **MRS Policy Unit** will provide that voice, establishing research as a key driver for much-needed jobs and growth in the UK and the EU. The focus of the Unit will also be wider than MRS's previous policy activities; we recognise it is not enough to simply respond to proposals from government and regulators. The Unit will be the conduit through which MRS will influence policy and standards issues relevant to the research, insight and evidence community. This will be achieved in a number of ways:

- through direct discussion with Ministers
- through detailed discussions with civil servants (including regulators)
- through written responses to consultation documents
- through liaison with other policy units/representative bodies on topics of mutual interest
- through production of research and policy papers
- by taking a position in the media (both trade and national press), social media and other means of direct communication.

For more information about the Unit contact  
Barry Ryan, Director, MRS Policy Unit.  
Email: [barry.ryan@mrs.org.uk](mailto:barry.ryan@mrs.org.uk)



My MRS highlight

**Hosting the first Global Research Business Network meeting at the MRS Annual Conference, linking MRS members and Company Partners with 2,500 research businesses in 25 countries**

Barry Ryan  
Director, Policy Unit

## Responding to change

The main issue for the last year has been the proposed revision to the European Data Protection Framework. A proposal for a General Regulation on Data Protection was published in January 2012.

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In **Europe**, working through EFAMRO (the European Research Federation), MRS:

- met MEPs from across the political spectrum who will be influential in the passage of any new data protection legislation through the European Parliament
- successfully lobbied the European Commission for changes to the final proposal following the release of a draft proposal for a General Regulation on Data Protection
- drafted a submission to the Council of Europe on its plans to revise Convention 108 on Data Protection. The submission focused on consent, exemptions of historical, statistical and scientific research and profiling. Convention 108 has been signed by 41 countries and is the basis for data protection law in many countries outside the EU
- attended a Council of Europe stakeholders' meeting to discuss principles and guidelines for the regulation of social networking services
- attended key seminars conference and events where the development of the legislation was discussed.

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In the **UK**, MRS:

- responded to the call by the Ministry of Justice for evidence on the European Commission's proposed Data Protection Regulation. Our comments related to consent, children, profiling exemptions for research, and the business impact of the proposals
- joined the UK Industry Group on Data Protection Regulation (with the Advertising Association, the Direct Marketing Association and the Interactive Advertising Bureau) to draft a common position on the issues the industry identified as most concerning
- joined the CBI Data Protection Working Group and contributed to the development of its position paper on the proposed regulation

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In May 2011, working through EFAMRO, MRS responded to the Commission's Green Paper on Public Procurement.

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In October 2011, working through EFAMRO, MRS responded to the Commission's consultation on the application of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive. The response detailed why suggesting and frugging should be considered to fall within the practices set out in the directive that are unfair in all circumstances.

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Throughout the year MRS was part of the ICC UK Working Group on Cookies, developing guidance to assist website operators in complying with changes to the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.

## Global Research Business Network

In October 2011 EFAMRO, the Americas Research Industry Alliance (ARIA) and the Asia Pacific Research Committee (APRC) began discussions on the formation of a network to exchange information and strengthen national research associations. Together the three federations represented 25 national associations and over 2500 research businesses.

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In November 2011 the Executive Board of EFAMRO proposed that EFAMRO join the new Global Business Research Network with ARIA and APRC. This proposal was supported by the member associations, including MRS.

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In March 2012 GRBN held its first meeting at the MRS Annual Conference where the scope of co-operation between members was discussed. A press launch of the network was also held.

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- For documents relating to proposals and responses visit [www.mrs.org.uk/policy](http://www.mrs.org.uk/policy)



My MRS highlight

**Opening the doors at the Annual Conference and seeing how impressed the delegates were with the rebrand**

Nikki Bower  
Operations Manager

## Member events and networks

The MRS Be Part of It Road Show consulted Members and non-Members in London, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Leeds and Bristol about the future of MRS.

The campaign to encourage members and non-members to become Full Members via the Fast Track Scheme continued. Two workshops took place in November and February, and in March we launched a webinar. This guides prospective candidates through the Fast Track Scheme procedures, including the twelve benchmark standards for Full MRS Membership.

The topic for MRS on the Road for 2011-2012 was Research in Virtual Worlds: Social Media, e-Ethnography and the Code. The Road Show for members and Company Partners stopped at Edinburgh, London, Birmingham, Bristol and Leeds.

The regular programme of Members' Evenings, which are often standing room only, continued throughout the year.

A third series of Breakfast Bites and Focus On seminars continued in 2011. Topics included Strategic Analysis and Managing your Talent.

MRS continued to work with the Association for Survey Computing in organising a regular programme of Technology Evenings which attracted good audiences.

MRS Scotland held its regular annual programme of events.

MRS continued to support the South West network which held four networking events.

Members in Manchester organised two more events in 2011.

Members in Yorkshire organised a very successful event in May 2011.

MRS support for young researchers continued via the R-Net annual programme of six events for the under 30s.

A 'How to Win' workshop was held to provide advice on how to plan and write an award entry for the annual MRS Research Awards.

## Members' events attendance

2011/12

The Research Awards Dinner  
588

Members' Evenings  
595

MRS on the Road  
134

Breakfast Seminars  
317

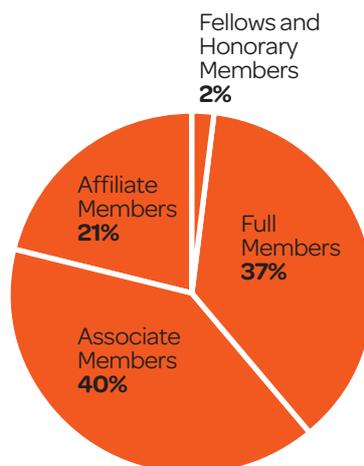
RNet  
343

Regional and other networks  
404

Be Part of It Road Show  
170

## MRS Members

as of 31 March 2012  
Total = 5,734



## Qualifications

### MRS Advanced Certificate in Market and Social Research Practice

In the 2011/12 financial year a total of 494 candidates participated in assessment for the Advanced Certificate qualification, an increase of 36% on 2010/11.

319 candidates were awarded the qualification – a 64% pass rate.

There was candidate representation from over 20 countries.

### MRS Diploma in Market and Social Research

There were 103 unit participations in the June 2011 and December 2011 MRS Diploma assessment rounds with 16 participants awarded the overall qualification having successfully completed all 4 units.

### MRS Certificate in Market and Social Research

244 candidates passed the MRS Certificate in Market and Social Research.

A third-party external audit of MRS qualifications took place in April 2012 to verify the quality assurance of MRS qualifications, associated processes and accredited centres. The outcome of the audit confirmed that all criteria were fully met.

## Training

Over 2,000 individuals received training from MRS in some form, including over 900 attending MRS face-to-face training courses.

76 training courses were delivered, covering basic to advanced levels of research skills, such as depth interviewing, conjoint analysis, influence and impact, and business and leadership skills.

469 individuals attended MRS online training covering both research and business skills.

Four new face-to-face courses were introduced into the annual training programme.

108 people attended the six webinars delivered over the year.

As part of the In-Company training, MRS designed and delivered 54 days of bespoke training for 40 customers, reaching over 600 delegates around the world.

A series of free taster training sessions were delivered as part of the MRS Academy at the Insight Show.



My MRS highlight

**Welcoming a record-breaking number of Company Partners to MRS. In difficult economic times MRS accreditation is perhaps more valued than it's ever been**

Anne-Marie Leech  
Company Partner Service



My MRS highlight

**The satisfaction in seeing so many of our training delegates succeeding in their careers and the knowledge that MRS has helped them get there**

Robin Nash, Training and Development Manager

## Company Partners

The MRS Company Partner Service grew by 2.4% in 2011/12, achieving worldwide membership and reaching a record number of 419 Company Partners. These comprise a variety of organisations, including digital, online and field agencies, data and business analysts, marketing and brand consultancies, large and bespoke research agencies, management consultancies, viewing facilities, clients, software suppliers and recruitment agencies.

The Company Partner Service discounted rate for one-day tickets was increased by 20% in January 2012 in line with increased operational costs.

In March 2012 the CPSAB agreed that CPS fees should be linked to the RPI (currently 4%) with effect from May 2012. This excludes organisations tied into a multi-year agreement.

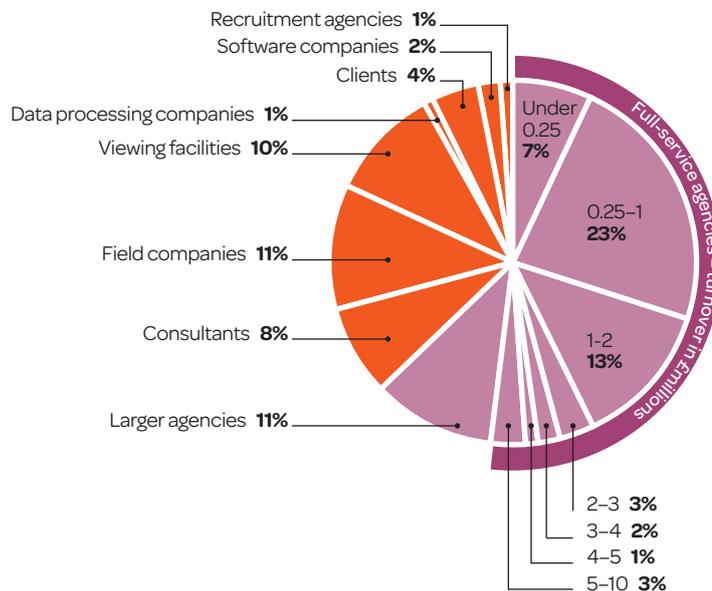
Following the MRS brand refresh a new MRS Company Partner logo was launched alongside an invigorated MRS Company Partner area on the website. This provides all employees of Company Partner organisations with access to the exclusive benefits. It has received excellent feedback and has seen the number of visits to the site double.

A series of complimentary Professional Standards Briefings were held for Company Partners, covering a number of topics including data protection and data security, the MRS Code of Conduct, employment law and regulation and online data collection and privacy.

The Company Partner Service team represented the MRS at a CIM Creative Communications event, where Company Partners were invited to present and attend the seminars free of charge.

## MRS Company Partners by organisation type

as at 31 March 2012  
Total = 419



## Publishing

Research-Live.com had its best year yet in 2010/11. Traffic to the website grew almost 40%, with Twitter followers exceeding 11,000. The site topped the list of the 100 most re-tweeted market research tweeters.

A panel of market research experts picked *Research* magazine as the research publication with 'the most transformative impact on market research'.

*Research* magazine introduced new special reports covering the latest thinking in neuroscience, behavioural economics and the highly popular infographics features.

The *Research Buyer's Guide* 2012 contained 560 company listings with 46 new entrants – up 84% on the previous year.

Researchjobfinder.com continues to flourish with a wealth of vacancies from leading brands including the BBC, Visit Britain, Which, PepsiCo, Google and American Express. There were over 20,500 applications to the site.

## Conferences

### The Annual Conference

The MRS Annual Conference 2012 took place on 20 and 21 March at a new venue, the Grange Tower Hill Hotel in London, which proved very popular with both delegates and participants. Once more the conference provided a multi-streamed event, and included the launch of the new MRS brand identity. It was a content-rich programme with a wide range of speakers and session formats. Keynote speakers included Magnus Lindkvist, Marcus du Sautoy and Oliver James.

Overall satisfaction was high with 88% of delegates satisfied with the conference – up from 78% in 2011.

### One-day conferences

MRS expanded its series of one-day events, adding three more events than the previous year. A diverse range of topics was covered in the 2011/12 programme, including healthcare, NPd, social media, financial services and fashion and beauty.

Fourteen one-day conferences were delivered with an average of 52 paying delegates.



My MRS highlight

**Surviving my first year in the editor's chair, though my hairline has suffered for it**

Brian Tarran, Editor of *Research* magazine and Research Live



My MRS highlight

**It's always great to see the best in the sector get the recognition they deserve at the Awards Dinner, and it's a brilliant night out. Even if I am technically working**

John Bizzell, Customer Engagement Co-ordinator

## Ensuring standards consistency

**June 2011** MRS published revised guidance on the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003. This followed changes to the law requiring consent for the use of cookies by websites.

**June 2011** MRS held a meeting with online research organisations to discuss panel incentives and the use of cookies in the online research.

**July 2011** Revised Guidelines for Qualitative Research (including observation, ethnographic and deliberative research) were published.

**July 2011** Revised Guidelines for Questionnaire Design were published.

**July 2011** Ten Tips for DIY Research were published.

**July 2011** MRS published a discussion paper, Online Data Collection and Privacy, exploring the legal and ethical issues of collecting personal data online.

As a result in **August 2011** MRS participated in an online debate on the ethical basis for social media research.

**October 2011** Revised Guidelines for Mystery Shopping were published.

**October 2011** Revised Guidelines for Business to Business Research were published.

**January 2012** Revised Guidelines for Online Research were published.

**January 2012** Revised Guidelines for Research with Children and Young People were published.

**February 2012** Revised Guidelines for Employee Research were published.

**February 2012** Revised Regulations for Administering Incentives and Free Prize Draws were published.

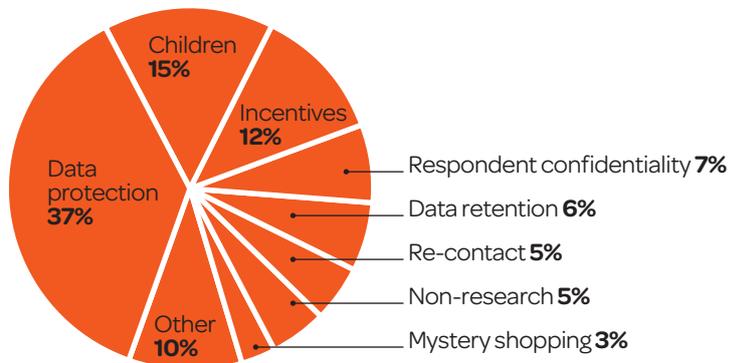
### MRS Freephone

8,068 telephone calls were received by MRS Freephone. Respondents can check the validity of a research supplier by calling this service; only research organisations with MRS members can be listed.

## Codeline queries

2011/12

Total = 535



## Complaint outcomes

<b>Disciplinary cases</b>	Member	Company Partner	Total
Complaint upheld	1	0	1
Complaint not upheld	4	6	10
Outstanding at 31 March 2011	4	5	9
Total disciplinary cases			29
Resolved by Standards Department			44
Total complaints investigated			64

## Complaint topics

### Members

Research design	5
Reporting results	1
Member behaviour	2
Data protection	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

### Company partners

Interviewer behaviour	2
Employment dispute	2
Research design	4
Panels	2
Data protection	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

### Resolved by Standards department

Interviewer behaviour	12
Incentives	8
Employment dispute	4
Research design	8
Reporting results	2
Panels	4
Member behaviour	0
Misleading respondents	1
Data protection	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>



My MRS highlight

**Being offered the opportunity to chair a session at the Annual Conference, and managing to do so in spite of stressing over the launch of the new MRS brand and website at the event**

Debrah Harding  
Chief Operating Officer

## Media campaign highlights

Coverage was secured in trade and national press related to MRS and Research events, the Research Awards and annual and one-day conferences, including the MRS's Be Part of It roadshows in early 2012.

By-lined articles appeared in targeted vertical sector media featuring MRS and Company Partner representatives.

Comment opportunities were created about the value of research delivered for Company Partners and in-house researchers in media including the sector press.

Regular commentary was provided on marketing and branding and the value of research in the marketing media.

Careers profiling and advice pieces were published in *The Guardian* and the *London Evening Standard*.

Press activity to publicise appointments and promotions (Jane Frost CBE, Phyllis Macfarlane and Brian Tarran), MRS publications, consultations and guidance, securing coverage in the marketing and market research press.

Events were monitored and active and reactive media strategies were prepared.

In 2011/12 over 40 media enquiries were answered. A further 64 positive pieces of media coverage were achieved in the publications on the right.

### National

*The Guardian*  
*London Evening Standard*

### Marketing and research press

*Marketing*  
*Marketing Week*  
*Research*  
WARC.com  
MrWeb  
AQR In Brief  
Planung & Analyse  
Brand Republic

### Sector press

*New Media Age*  
*Health Business*  
*Education Business*  
*Government Business*  
PRWeb  
*InPublishing*  
Newsline



## Summary of financial informaton

The launch of a new identity for MRS in 2011/12 (including marketing materials and a website) constituted a significant investment in the future of the Society.

This summary of key financial information is extracted from the audited accounts for the year 2011/12.

A copy of the Statutory Report and Accounts submitted to Companies House is available to MRS members on request.

	£'000 2011/12	£'000 2010/11
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### Summary income and expenditure account

#### Income

Individual membership subscriptions	627	659
Company Partner Service	256	239
Publications & information services	1,273	1,392
Training & qualifications	601	461
Conferences & seminars	548	569
Other services	290	283
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,595</b>	<b>3,603</b>

#### Expenditure

Cost of activities	1,093	1,116
Employment	1,826	1,726
Other administration less sundry income	839	658
Net financing charges and taxation	6	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,764</b>	<b>3,551</b>

### Recognised gains and losses

Net surplus	(169)	52
Adjustment on property value	108	78
<b>Contribution to reserves</b>	<b>(61)</b>	<b>130</b>

### Summary balance sheet

Tangible assets	2,883	2,875
Net current liabilities	(405)	(239)
Long term liabilities	(392)	(488)
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>2,086</b>	<b>2,148</b>

Property revaluation reserve	500	391
Income and expenditure account	1,586	1,757
<b>Reserves</b>	<b>2,086</b>	<b>2,148</b>

## The Market Research Society

With members in more than 60 countries, MRS is the world's largest research association. It's for everyone with professional equity in market, social and opinion research (whether you use it or provide it) and in business intelligence, market analysis, customer insight and consultancy.

### Evidence matters

Evidence helps build strategy and reduce risk; it's essential for good commercial and public policy decisions. If you need, use, generate or interpret evidence, MRS can help you. Our members have commissioned and provided evidence that has helped win elections, launch global brands and understand profound trends in society. We support, promote and aim to enrich the research and business world.

In consultation with its individual members and Company Partners, MRS supports best practice by setting and enforcing industry standards. The commitment to uphold the MRS Code of Conduct is supported by the Codeline service and a wide range of specialist guidelines.

[www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk)



My MRS highlight

**Working with our Fellows on the Fast Track Scheme, I am always struck by how good researchers are at giving back to their industry**

Michelle Denslow, customer engagement manager

## Company information

The Market Research Society  
(Limited by Guarantee)  
Company Number 518685

### Registered office and business address

The Old Trading House  
15 Northburgh Street  
London  
EC1V 0JR

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7490 4911

Fax: +44 (0)20 7490 0608

Email: [info@mrs.org.uk](mailto:info@mrs.org.uk)

Website: [www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk)

### Auditors

Arram Berlyn Gardner  
30 City Road  
London  
EC1Y 2AB

### Bankers

Barclays Bank plc  
27 Soho Square  
London  
W1D 3QR

### Solicitors

Bates Wells & Braithwaite London LLP  
2-6 Cannon Street  
London  
EC4M 6YH

## Officers 2011/12

Rita Clifton  
*President*

Rowland Lloyd  
*Vice President*

### Council

Vanella Jackson  
*Chair*

Raz Khan  
*Honorary Secretary-Treasurer*

Fay Arbon  
*Engaging client/in-house  
insight teams and CSR Project*

Crispin Beale  
*Engaging client/in-house  
insight teams project*

Nikki Bell  
*Leading the constitutional review*

Ruth Betts  
*Chair of the Management Board  
and CSR*

Susan Blackall  
*Chair of the Company Partner  
Advisory Board, member of the Market  
Research Standards Board, member  
of the Professional Development  
Advisory Board and CSR project*

Geoff Gosling  
*Chair of the Market Research  
Standards Board*

Fiona Jack  
*Deputy Chair of the Market Research  
Standards Board*

Barbara Langer  
*Chair of the Professional Development  
Advisory Board and member of  
CSR project*

Pat Molloy  
*Deputy Chair of the Company Partner  
Service Advisory Board and member  
of engaging data/analytics sector  
project*

Richard Sheldrake  
*Member of the Company Partner  
Service Advisory Board project and  
engaging the online/digital sector*

Leslie Sopp  
*Member of CSR, constitutional review,  
engaging data/analytics sector and  
engaging other associations projects*

Lists of those serving on MRS  
Committees and Advisory Boards  
are available on the MRS website  
[www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk)

Rita Clifton



Vanella Jackson



Raz Khan



Crispin Beale



Fay Arbon



Nikki Bell

Ruth Betts



Rowland Lloyd

Fiona Jack

Geoff Gosling



Richard Sheldrake



Barbara Langer

Pat Molloy



Leslie Sopp