



Arthritis
ACTION



IMPACT REPORT

2023-24

arthritisation.org.uk

FOREWORD

Welcome to our Impact Report 2023/2024.

It has been a year of transformation, with an election and a change of Government, a continuing cost of living crisis and strain on social care and the NHS. Despite the challenges faced, it has been incredibly rewarding to be able to help people through this period of uncertainty.

We have just completed year one of our 2024/26 Strategy. It has been a privilege to have directly supported over 9,000 people this year through our Groups and Self-Management Events; clinical appointments with our network of physiotherapists, osteopaths, and acupuncturists; webinars; 'Home Strength' exercise classes; nutrition and weight management consultations; the podcast; and our personalised member pathway service.

We are pleased to have delivered self-management presentations to over 2,000 people, of which over a third represented ethnic minorities and low-income communities. Our work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) has not stopped there. As a key strategic objective, we have focused our efforts to reach underserved communities through our resources and services, both digitally and in person.

Our website has provided advice and information to over 200,000 visitors, with 'arthritis and disability benefits' receiving 45,000 visits alone, highlighting the continuing need for financial support in the current economic climate. We introduced a 'work and arthritis' resource to help improve the working lives of people with arthritis, and to support their employers.

Addressing the different needs of younger people with arthritis, we continued to develop our tailored services, groups, introductory self-management events, a dedicated newsletter, a WhatsApp service, specialist webinars and a new season of our popular Podcast. We covered an array of topics from parenting and family planning, to cultural barriers, accessing care, and resistance training.

Over the year we have actively expanded our reach to healthcare professionals. We are very pleased to have introduced over 800 healthcare professionals to our self-management and wellbeing resources.

We were proud to work with 98 leisure centres across the country, to transform them into local community MSK hubs. The project 'UKRI Transforming gyms into community MSK hubs: mobilising the UK leisure sector to deliver inclusive, accessible, personalised and gamified health services for Older Adults with MSK conditions' concluded with an important report in September.

We have continued our efforts to raise awareness of arthritis and that of the Charity, reaching over 2 million people on our social media channels, and a combined audience of 150 million through media coverage and PR activities.

We are grateful to all our members, donors, supporters, and corporate partners, including Inner Wheel, UCB, Amgen, Abbvie, and Clear Channel, for their dedication to making a difference to the lives of people affected by arthritis.

Whilst we are extremely proud of all the achievements over the past, a lot remains to be done to support the millions of people affected by arthritis in the UK. We will continue to work closely with our valued Members, partners, supporters, volunteers, and service users, to help people live a happier, healthier life with arthritis.



Dan Torjussen-Proctor
Chair of Arthritis Action



Noha Al Afifi
Interim CEO of Arthritis Action

WHO WE ARE

Arthritis Action was founded in 1942 by Charles de Coti-Marsh, who developed a self-help programme for people with arthritis based on a combination of diet and physical therapy.

Our fundamental aims remain the same, and we take pride in continuing this longstanding tradition of helping people with arthritis enjoy a more active life with less pain through self-management, in line with the best available evidence.

We are the UK charity giving hands-on, practical help to improve the quality of life of people affected by arthritis. We offer healthy eating and nutritional advice; access to clinical appointments with our network of osteopaths, physiotherapists, and acupuncturists; mental health resources; exercise tips; and pain management techniques, to help people take control of their arthritis, manage the pain it can cause, and enjoy life to the full.

WHAT WE DO

Although over 10 million people live with arthritis in the UK, we know that each person is unique in the way they manage their symptoms. This is precisely why we tailor our self-management approach to meet individual needs.

Our self-management approach encompasses the following services:



Nutritional and weight management consultations with our registered Dietitian



Arthritis Action Online Groups including coffee mornings and evening events



Factsheets, our Members' magazine, electronic newsletters and online resources



A six-week virtual exercise programme, aiming to build strength and support for joints



Subsidised clinical appointments with our registered Osteopaths, Physiotherapists and Acupuncturists



Signposting to activities in communities, advising on exercising safely, and collaborating with activity providers



Our Personalised Member Pathway service, enabling people to set goals and receive personalised support to achieve them



Our successful Podcast and webinars, featuring a variety of experts and stories from people with lived experience



Young Adult events, a quarterly newsletter, and specialist groups exclusively for younger people with arthritis



Self-management educational events to learn about techniques for managing the physical and mental aspects of arthritis

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE



1 To empower people living with arthritis to better self-manage their condition.



2 To reach more young adults across the UK and support more people in work of all ages.



3 To have a self-management approach that attracts referrals from healthcare professionals.



4 To raise awareness of the Charity and that of arthritis and MSK conditions.



5 To actively reach out to and make a difference for diverse communities affected by arthritis across the UK.



6 To achieve long-term financial sustainability.

OUR IMPACT

Overall Member Satisfaction

94% ARE SATISFIED WITH OUR SERVICES

"I appreciate you all very much. Being a member is probably the best £25 I have spent all year."

- ✓ Arthritis Action Groups
- ✓ Clinical Support
- ✓ Members' Magazine
- ✓ Online Exercise Classes
- ✓ Online Resources
- ✓ Podcast
- ✓ Self-Management Events
- ✓ Webinars
- ✓ Personalised Member Pathway
- ✓ Nutritional & Weight Management Consultations
- ✓ Annual General Meeting & Members' Conference

To meet our strategic priorities, we delivered the following services in 2023/24:

1 To empower people living with arthritis to better self-manage their condition.

Nutrition & Weight Management Service

95% satisfaction

95% said the service made them feel more knowledgeable about their arthritis

86% said it had brought them closer to achieving their weight/nutrition goals




"I am spreading the word about Arthritis Action as in the short time I have been with you, I have seen pain levels reduced and my mobility improved and it is all down to the Arthritis Action team. I am so grateful I found you."

"Martin is an experienced dietitian who is up to date on all the latest research so you know you are getting good, evidence-based advice you can rely on, but it is also delivered by him in a personable and supportive way."

"Martin was so helpful. He talked me through some practical steps I can take with my diet to make sure I am still looking after my joints over the coming months and the latest research to support this which was both helpful and interesting. I feel much more confident now going forward and am even looking forward to trying out some of his ideas."



Personalised Member Pathway

100% satisfaction with the Pathway service 

97% agreed that the Pathway has increased their knowledge about self-management, and improved confidence in managing their condition

95% agreed that the Pathway has brought them closer to achieving their goals

"It has been very enjoyable, and I really like the personal touch; you are treated as an individual, not just as someone with arthritis."

Clinical Appointments (subsidised treatments with our network of osteopaths, physiotherapists and acupuncturists)

96% would recommend the Clinical Appointment service

89% agreed that using this service has improved their ability to do physical tasks

95% agreed that using this service helped improve their daily experience of arthritis



"Arthritis Action do a fantastic job! I always recommend Arthritis Action to people living with arthritis. The two reduced price treatments make a huge difference and the Associated Practitioner I saw was exceptional."

"Very appreciative of the opportunity to see an Associated Practitioner. Love the information that's available."

Home Strength Exercise Class

100% enjoyed the class and saw improvement in strength after 6 weeks

89% felt stronger and better at managing daily tasks, after the course

"I felt motivated to continue with the exercises after the class due to Martin's ongoing enthusiasm and commitment to each and every one of us who took part."



Online Arthritis Action Groups

98% said the Online Groups gave them the opportunity to learn from others

94% said the Online Groups improved their confidence

93% felt they understood their arthritis better and more confident and in control of their symptoms



"The meetings improve my wellbeing and make life easier."

"You can pick up some really useful tips."

"A hive of information that can benefit any arthritis sufferer or carer."

Self-Management Events

100% were likely to apply what they learnt in the course of their daily lives

100% agreed that these events help people better understand how to manage their arthritis

"It was a useful guide to living with arthritis for someone like myself who is newly diagnosed."

"Very good overview of arthritis."



Events/Presentations

120+ group meetings, events and presentations were organised this year.

More than 9,000 people attended our Groups and presentations, including patients, carers, community organisations, corporate staff, healthcare professionals, and diverse communities.



"I'm finding the groups really helpful in learning to adapt to arthritis. There's loads to learn, and the emotional challenges have been tough!"

"I have often found them informative, with good practical help and suggestions. It is also helpful to listen to people who have similar problems. I do appreciate the range of specific topics covered."

2 To reach more young adults across the UK and support more people in work of all ages.

Work & Arthritis Hub & Factsheet

3,000 people have found our new work and arthritis hub & factsheet helpful

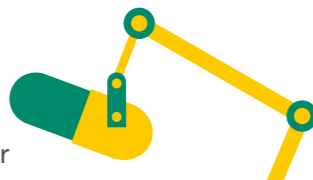


Supporting Young Adults living with Arthritis

We are pleased to have supported more young adults living with arthritis. We have supported over 7,300 people this year through our dedicated Young Adult Hub on our website. We ran 10 Young Adult Group meetings, 2 events for young adults 'Arthritis and Me', continued the success of our quarterly electronic newsletter 'Arthritis & Me' reaching 200 subscribers, held two specialist webinars, and continued our successful Podcast with a new season.

Podcast

5.8k plays across all platforms – more than double, year on year



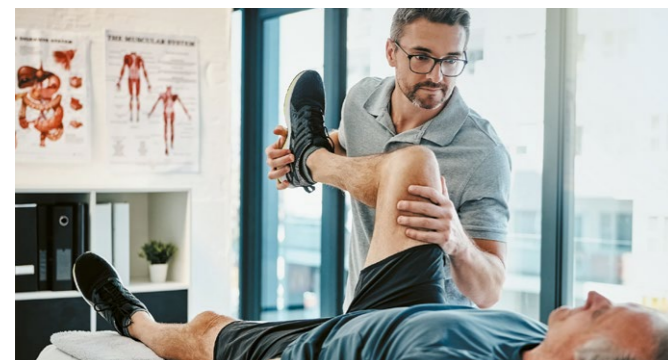
"Very informative. A really cool podcast."

"I am a new member and I am so glad to have joined. The podcasts are absolutely excellent."

3 To have a self-management approach that attracts referrals from healthcare professionals.

Associated Practitioners

We have a network of 161 osteopaths, physiotherapists and acupuncturists across the country, providing treatments for Members to help improve their symptoms.



Talking Therapies presentations



We offered training sessions to 79 Talking Therapies services, to raise awareness for arthritis and the impact it can have on patients. Our sessions were attended by 883 healthcare professionals.

4 To raise awareness of the Charity and that of arthritis and MSK conditions.



PR Combined reach of **152 million**

We worked on two reports



Social media

Our social media activity reached

2 million people



Website

236,000 visitors

538,000 page views



5 To actively reach out to and make a difference for diverse communities affected by arthritis across the UK.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

To help tackle health inequalities and support more people from diverse communities, including areas of low income and ethnic minority populations, we undertake the following activities each year:

Community outreach and presentations

We delivered 70 presentations to 2,000 people with arthritis across the UK, of which 32% represented ethnic minority groups and low-income groups.

Supporting people with low health literacy

We continue to develop a variety of material to support more people living with arthritis in simplified language to make the content more inclusive and accessible to people of varying literacy levels.

Accessibility

We ensure that all our content meets accessibility requirements, offering transcripts and incorporating subtitling best practice across our digital channels.

6 To achieve long-term financial sustainability.

Partnerships

We would like to thank all our donors, partners and sponsors, including Clear Channel, Abbvie, UCB and Amgen, for their unwavering support for our work. It's been an incredible year and we are proud of everything we have achieved together.



Fundraising & Legacies **£987,554**



ELIZABETH'S STORY

"My GP dismissed spasms and back pain in 2019, as nothing serious. Going into lockdown, I found myself suddenly stuck at home, and my symptoms worsened. After an MRI and X-ray, that's when I heard the term "wear and tear", making it sound like it was inevitable and nothing I could do would change that. To manage the pain, I had physiotherapy and regular injections.

Arthritis has impacted all parts of my life. The company I work for advises on workplace assessments for disability. Even then, I was still apprehensive about telling them of my own disability. When I plucked up the courage, they said I was just the person to be representing them! I now have adaptive equipment at my home office to help me with my job.

My life outside work has been impacted too. Having to turn down invitations to go out, my social life started to shrink. Not seeing friends and being the lively person I was before, really played on my mental health.

It's very frustrating that things I didn't think twice about before, are now so bothersome such as putting on socks, or picking up something I've dropped on the floor. Even my sleep is affected, as moving around in bed can wake me up in pain.

My heritage is Ghanaian, and disability of any kind is viewed very negatively there, speaking about any kind



of weakness is firmly discouraged – you don't show these things to the world. A typical response would be "You can't have arthritis you are too young". My mum has arthritis but that is considered acceptable because she is 84!

I first came across Arthritis Action from seeing a poster in my local high street. It struck me that the person featured wasn't someone you typically associate as having arthritis and it made me want to find out more. Coming to Arthritis Action has really changed my outlook on the future. The self-management support has been great, like the advice to keep a food diary to see how I can improve my diet and manage my weight. I became a Trustee as I want to give back to the community too.

It is very important to me that arthritis isn't just seen as affecting old people, and that it affects people of all ages, races and colours."

Elizabeth Takyi



**SUPPORT US TO CONTINUE
MAKING AN IMPACT ON
PEOPLE'S LIVES**

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