

# 2019/20 IMPACT REPORT



[arthritisACTION.org.uk](https://arthritisACTION.org.uk)



## CONTENTS

# 2

## Welcome from the Chairman and CEO

# 3

## About us

# 4

## Our impact

# 7

## Case Studies

## WELCOME TO OUR IMPACT REPORT 2019/2020

**At the time of writing this report, we face the unprecedented challenge of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Like many organisations and charities, we have had to deal with an overwhelming amount of uncertainty and respond to the challenges and developments that each day brings.**

In our Members' COVID-19 and Arthritis survey, many have reported increased pain, elevated feelings of isolation and poor sleep quality, with over half reporting an increased reliance on pain medication due to limited access to healthcare and postponed routine operations. This is why it is more important than ever that we continue to run our vital services to support people with arthritis during lockdown and beyond.

We were fortunate to receive generous funding from the Government's National Lottery Coronavirus Community Support Fund, to help support the running of our Virtual Groups, which we launched to enable people to continue to receive peer-support during lockdown.

We are very pleased to report that we organised over 140 Group meetings and events this year, with over 2,500 people in attendance. We have also provided much-needed telephone support to more than 2,000 people since lockdown in March.

In response to the pandemic, we developed a dedicated COVID-19 hub on our website, featuring content and advice for people self-isolating or spending more time indoors. This attracted over 22,000 visits. Our signature Online Self-Management Resource, comprised of 27 videos on a wide range of topics, has been viewed over 50,000 times, with average session times exceeding 5 minutes.

Our online mental health and exercise directories are proving to be extremely relevant during the ongoing pandemic, with more than 8,000 people making use of our resources. Our webinar series has also been very successful, with over 200 attendees engaging in topics including Rheumatoid Arthritis, COVID-19 and Arthritis, and Exercise and Mental Wellbeing.

We have worked even harder this year to raise awareness of arthritis and the impact it has on daily life. We engaged more than 1 million people on our social media channels, and reached over 40 million people through our PR efforts and media coverage, nationally and regionally, which is phenomenal.

We are also very pleased to have been able to continue offering our individualised support to our Members, comprising nutritional and weight management consultations; clinical appointments with our network of osteopaths, physiotherapists and acupuncturists; and our Personalised Member Pathway.

What the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us is that no matter the circumstances, our work must continue. None of the above would have been possible without the endless support of our Members, partners, volunteers, supporters and service users. We are confident that together, we will continue to make a difference for communities affected by arthritis across the UK.

### Robin Nye

Chair of Arthritis Action



### Shantel Irwin

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 only 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

Arthritis Action offers people with all forms of arthritis a holistic self-management approach that can be tailored to suit each individual based on their condition, pain level, activity levels, eating habits and lifestyle. 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



Subsidised clinical appointments with our registered Osteopaths, Physiotherapists and Acupuncturists



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



Factsheets, our Members' magazine, electronic newsletters and online resources on a variety of topics including self-management, physical activity, and mental wellbeing



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



Identifying the best models for exercise suitable for people with arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions



Arthritis Action Groups across the country

# OUR IMPACT

## OUR SERVICES

### Overall Member Satisfaction

**95%**

ARE SATISFIED  
WITH OUR  
SERVICES

“Arthritis Action offers clear and comprehensive information. They provide excellent 1:1 communication so every member counts. They reinforced what I need to do and what the science doesn't support regarding management of osteoarthritis.”

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



### Diet & Weight Management Service



**100%** said the service brought them closer to reaching their weight/nutritional goals

**100%** are more knowledgeable about their arthritis and their symptoms have improved

“It's an incredible service to offer as part of the Charity's membership. It's great to be able to speak to someone on the phone and have suggestions catered to my situation and needs.”

### Groups & Online Support

**98%** found Arthritis Action's Groups helpful

**97%** found Arthritis Action's online resources helpful



“I really enjoy the Groups and they helped me embrace my status as an osteoarthritis patient without having to let it dominate my life.”

### Online Exercise Classes



reported improved balance and stability

**4 in 5** reported improved strength

**4 in 5** reported improved sense of control over their arthritis



**3 in 5** reported a reduction in pain

### Personalised Member Pathway

**100%** agreed that the Pathway has improved their confidence to self-manage their arthritis

**100%** agreed that the Pathway has increased their knowledge about self-management

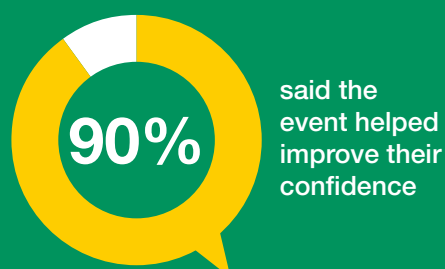
**90%** agreed that the Pathway has brought them closer to achieving their goals

**90%** agreed that the Pathway has helped improve their arthritis symptoms

## Self-Management Events

**95%** have a better understanding of their arthritis

**90%** believe the event improved their sense of control over their arthritis



“Although I knew a lot already, this reminded me of lots of things I had let slip, so it was good reinforcement. The more recent thinking about diet has been helpful.”

## Webinars

“It’s nice to have the opportunity to ask questions that often you do not have the opportunity to ask or are unable to receive answers to. The links to well-being, exercises and food are very helpful too. The webinars are well-run.”



**100%** found our webinars useful



## EVENTS

**Over 140**

Group meetings and presentations were organised this year, spread across 10 different regions and 23 locations.

**2,520 people**

attended our Groups and presentations.



## PARTNERSHIPS

We are members of the Arthritis & Musculoskeletal Alliance (ARMA) and National Voices



## ARMA



In response to the pandemic, ARMA coordinated directly with NHS England and alliance members on key advice and issues. ARMA also created a webpage for COVID-19, designed to provide easy access to the most relevant NHS resources and musculoskeletal guidance documents.



ARMA was invited to government briefings on shielding and also produced joint shielding guidance for people with musculoskeletal conditions.



ARMA was a champion for the NHS Change Challenge, a project to identify the new and innovative ways of working that have been rapidly developed across the NHS during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure beneficial changes are captured and locked in.



The platform received over **200 change ideas**, more than 400 user registrations, and over **10,000 page views**.

The hashtag **#nhschangechallenge** got over **3 million impressions on Twitter**.



## National Voices



Their COVID-19 work and emphasis on the shielding category and elective care waiting times made media appearances on BBC News, The Times, BMJ, and HSJ.



Referenced multiple times by senior decision makers and parliamentarians. For example, NHS CEO Simon Stevens referred to the *Five principles for the next phase of the Covid-19 response*, developed by patients’ groups through National Voices, in his letter to NHS leaders regarding the “Third phase of NHS response to COVID-19”.



They helped pressure Public Health England to publish a report into the impact of COVID on BAME communities.



NHS England has adopted recommendations from their report: *Rolling Out Social Prescribing*.



# FUNDRAISING, PR & DIGITAL OUTREACH

## Fundraising

**£263,010**  
WAS GENERATED  
THROUGH  
FUNDRAISING  
THIS YEAR

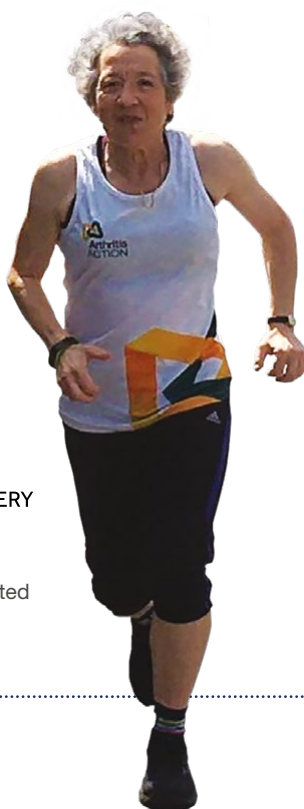


HM Government

In partnership with

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY  
COMMUNITY FUND

We received generous funding from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund, distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund, to support the running of our Virtual Groups.



## Social media

OUR SOCIAL MEDIA  
ACTIVITY  
REACHED  
**1.1 MILLION**  
PEOPLE



## Website

**203,000** VISITORS  
**470,000** PAGE VIEWS

## PR

REACHED OVER  
**40 MILLION**  
PEOPLE,  
COVERAGE ESTIMATED  
TO BE WORTH **£242,000** IN AVE



## Reserves statement

To achieve our strategy for the next three years (2021-2023), which is to increase the level of assistance we provide to the growing number of people living with arthritis across the UK, our Trustees have set an ambitious budget that involves incurring annual expenditure which will exceed operating income by approximately 250% per annum. In turn, this will result in operating deficits of between £730,000 and £900,000 and a corresponding reduction in our reserves. We also anticipate significant reductions in some of our income streams due to COVID-19. Therefore, to enable the Charity to continue to run its vital services to meet the everyday needs of people living with the debilitating effects of arthritis, the Trustees have also instructed senior management to identify and endeavour to secure additional revenue streams.

# CASE STUDIES

“ I have osteoarthritis in both knees. My GP initially advised I take painkillers and referred me to a physiotherapist.

I kept speaking to my GP about referring me to an orthopaedic consultant with regard to having some kind of surgery, but he was initially unwilling to do that because the arthritis wasn't 'bad enough' to warrant surgical intervention. After several years I got to see an orthopaedic consultant who told me that I needed a total knee replacement. My surgery was initially scheduled for May 2020. Of course, this has now been stymied for the foreseeable because of the coronavirus, leaving me to deal with my painful symptoms alone.

I came across Arthritis Action on the internet, just before lockdown began. I noticed they were soon to be holding a two-day seminar for people living with arthritis in Colchester, which my wife and I attended in February this year. The event was a real eye-opener. It felt reassuring to be surrounded by 15-20 other people, all of whom were facing the same problems I had and could share their stories with me. It felt wonderful to know that I wasn't alone in my struggle.

Since lockdown began, I've also been attending a number of online groups with others living with arthritis in Colchester, hosted by the charity. These online meetings have

allowed me to stay in touch with other people even while isolating at home. That feeling of community that I get out of the group meetings is, I'd say, the thing that has helped me the most during these unique times.”

**Ian Morton-Smith, 70**



**Our work is funded thanks to gifts left in Wills, with over three quarters of our income coming from this source. We rarely get to hear from the people who so kindly included us in their last wishes, so it is a privilege to be able to share Peggy's story, as told by her daughter.**

“ I saw both my parents severely affected by arthritis. My Dad had to take early retirement as the pain got worse and at 55 years of age, he had to leave the job he'd enjoyed for most of his life. My Mum undertook two knee replacement surgeries, two wrist operations and shoulder resurfacing due to her arthritis.

My parents were married for 66 years before my Dad passed away, two years before my Mum, who died at the start of Lockdown. They both wanted to help others living with arthritis with a gift in their Will.

My Mum, known as 'Peggy' to her friends, was Dad's primary carer. She continued to live in Sunderland in their assisted-living flat but we

did manage to get her out and about more than before. One of our happiest memories was her visit to our new home in Wales, to see her only Great Grandson, Charlie (pictured with Mum). I was so proud of her, as the train journey from North East England to South Wales is not an easy one!

It has been a really hard time. Nothing prepares you for the loss of your parents. This pandemic has made things even more difficult. I was pleased to be able to carry out their wishes and support Arthritis Action with a gift from their bequest. I know it will go towards helping people like my parents, live their lives to the full.”

**Peggy Gray's Story by Liz Pearce**







[arthritisACTION.org.uk](http://arthritisACTION.org.uk)

56 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6AE  
T: 020 3781 7120

Registered Charity Number 292569. Company Number 01914825.

