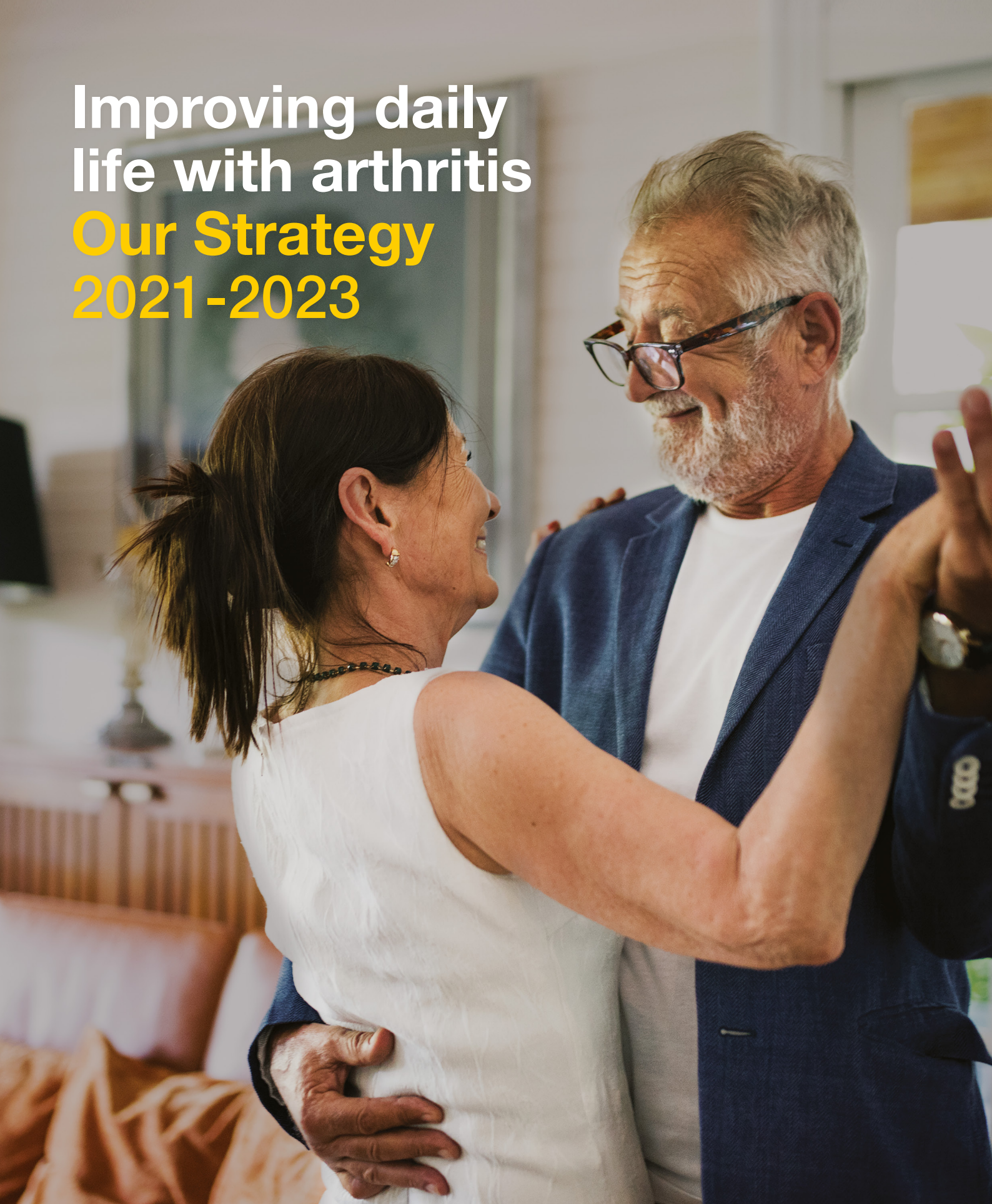


# Improving daily life with arthritis

## Our Strategy 2021-2023



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





# CONTENTS

3

Welcome

---

8

Our Impact

---

4

Vision, Mission, Core Values

---

10

Resources

---

5

Strategic Priorities

---

11

Summary

---

7

Self-Management Approach

---



# WELCOME!

Arthritis Action is a national charity 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. Over 10 million people live with arthritis in the UK, and with no cure, these numbers will continue to grow. This three-year strategy builds upon the foundations created during our last five-year strategy, and we will continue to identify innovative ways to support people living with arthritis. Thank you to our Members and those living with arthritis who have taken the time to give feedback on our services and resources; this has really helped us shape the next three-year plan.

We are the UK charity giving hands-on, practical help to improve the quality of life of people affected by arthritis. We offer an integrated self-management approach, which looks at both the physical and mental health impact of living with arthritis. Whilst we are a membership charity, we have transformed our services to benefit our membership and wider communities affected by arthritis and other musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions across the country. One size does not fit all, so we will continue to develop and offer a range of services so that people can find what works best for them.

Our self-management approach includes: healthy eating and nutritional consultations; access to clinical appointments with our network of osteopaths, physiotherapists, and acupuncturists; mental health resources; pain management techniques; local Groups; exercise advice and resources; and a personalised pathway for goal setting and self-management support, to help people take control of their arthritis, manage the pain it can cause, and enjoy life to the full.

There have been many challenges to overcome in 2020, and we missed running our usual face-to-face Arthritis Action Groups and Self-Management Events across the UK. It was important for us to continue supporting people, especially with many of us feeling more isolated at home. We therefore used this opportunity to trial new online services. We are proud to have moved our Groups online very quickly, to enable attendees to continue to receive peer support online. We have also provided much-needed telephone support to over 2,000 people this past year, and have learned new ways of staying in touch in this new environment. We piloted an online exercise class which was a big success, so we will offer this new service moving forward. We will continue to develop new ways of working in the next three years, featuring both online and in-person services, to share self-management information and support people's physical health and mental wellbeing.

We are investing in our fundraising team, because there's no doubt that in order to achieve our growth plans and aspirations over the next few years, we will need to generate new income streams and engage our supporters in a variety of fundraising activities. To achieve our new strategy, and increase the level of assistance we provide to the growing number of people living with arthritis across the UK, the Trustees have set an ambitious budget that involves incurring annual expenditure which will exceed operating income.

As we launch this new strategy in 2021, we would like to take this time to thank our team, Trustees, Members, volunteers, supporters and partners for what we have achieved. We look forward to working together over the next three years to continue supporting people living with arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions.

**Over 10 million people live with arthritis in the UK, and with no cure, these numbers will continue to grow. This three-year strategy builds upon the foundations created during our last five-year strategy, and we will continue to identify innovative ways to support people living with arthritis.**



# Our vision is for people to live active lives, free from the impact of arthritis.



## OUR MISSION IS TO:

- ▶ Empower people with arthritis to take control of their condition and lead a more active life.
- ▶ Continue to offer a holistic self-management approach, looking at both the physical and mental impact of living with arthritis.
- ▶ Inform people of the best available evidence-based approaches for managing arthritis.
- ▶ Help people gain the knowledge and confidence to manage their condition themselves and live life to the full.

## OUR CORE VALUES ARE:



### Community-oriented

People are at the heart of everything we do. Being part of the Arthritis Action community enables people to enjoy the advice, support and friendship of others actively using self-management. Our Groups bring local communities together to share their experiences of living with arthritis, and learn hints and tips.



### Practical

We are the only UK charity giving hands-on, practical support to improve quality of life for people affected by arthritis. We offer healthy eating and weight management advice, therapies, exercise tips, and pain management techniques, to help people with arthritis manage their condition themselves, and live life to the full.



### Informed by science

We promote evidence-based approaches that help control arthritis symptoms and manage their effects through lifestyle changes. We work with experts in health, therapies and nutrition, all recognised by professional bodies, and follow the latest clinical guidelines, to ensure that we give the most up-to-date information about arthritis.



### Impact-driven

We focus on making a lasting difference to the lives of people with arthritis. Every day we are inspired to make an impact through our dedication, passion and hard work. We work closely with our Members and wider community to achieve the best possible outcomes.



### Personal

Arthritis affects each of us in different ways. We provide individualised support to help people manage their physical and mental health. Each person can choose from our range of services to find solutions that work for them.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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

There can be a physical and emotional burden when living with the pain of arthritis, and many people with the condition can feel lonely. They will spend the majority of their time managing the symptoms of their condition on their own. Arthritis Action is here to support people with information and advice they can trust; connect them with each other through events and Groups; and give hands-on help to improve their symptoms. Ensuring people have the information and resources they need to self-manage their condition is key to improving their wellbeing.



### We will do this by:

- offering a range of services for both physical and mental wellbeing, so that people with MSK conditions can actively participate in their own health and care
- ensuring our services and resources are more widely promoted and visible, so that we can reach as many people across the UK as possible
- offering both in-person and online services and resources so that people can participate in a way that suits them best
- motivating people of all ages to take proactive steps to achieve good MSK health
- educating people on how they can prevent arthritis by leading an active and healthy lifestyle, particularly around nutrition and physical activity
- tackling the social isolation that can come with the associated pain and disability of living with arthritis

## 2 To reach more people across the UK who are motivated to lead a healthy lifestyle and self-manage the symptoms of arthritis.

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. Arthritis and MSK conditions affect people of all ages, and 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.



### We will do this by:

- proactively reaching out to people of working age, especially those aged 20-65 years
- adapting our current services to ensure value to younger people, while continuing to be innovative and offer a valuable service to those over the age of 65
- highlighting the importance of prevention, promoting a healthy lifestyle from a younger age
- increasing the number of committed Arthritis Action supporters
- engaging with corporates to reach people of working age, ensuring good MSK health in the workplace
- building our networks and collaborating with other organisations across the UK to reach more people, especially in areas we have Regional Co-ordinators
- reaching more people with an innovative use of digital technology

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

We promote evidence-based approaches that help control the symptoms of arthritis and manage its effects. We work with experts in health, therapies and nutrition and the wider sector, and follow the latest NICE guidelines, to ensure that we give the most up-to-date information about arthritis. We will work alongside healthcare professionals to promote the wider adoption of our self-management approach, to improve the daily life of those living with arthritis.

#### We will do this by:

- raising Arthritis Action's profile with healthcare professionals
- developing clear evidence-based advice for good MSK health
- working with healthcare professionals nationally and locally to provide services and events to support people and improve their MSK health and wellbeing
- educating Social Prescribing Link Workers, Specialists, Nurses, GPs and Allied Health Professionals on the benefits of self-management of MSK conditions



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

We aim to generate awareness of arthritis, both nationally and regionally, and the importance of adopting a supported self-management approach, to empower communities living with arthritis to take control of their health and care.



#### We will do this by:

- continuing to raise awareness of the impact arthritis has on daily life
- continuing to reach out to the media and use social media and digital campaigns to reach a wider audience
- continuing to speak to people living with arthritis and sharing their stories
- developing campaigns aimed at recognising MSK conditions
- continuing to collaborate with others in the sector, especially through the Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance (ARMA) and National Voices umbrella bodies
- networking and presenting to groups of people living with arthritis and other MSK conditions



# ARTHRITIS ACTION'S SELF-MANAGEMENT APPROACH

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 specific condition and lifestyle. Although over 10 million people live with arthritis in the UK, each person is unique in the way they manage their symptoms. Our approach enables people to choose the techniques that work for them best.

## 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



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



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



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

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



Local Arthritis Action Groups across the country, bringing like-minded people together to share information and tips on living with arthritis



# OUR IMPACT IN 2019/2020

## 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 regarding management of osteoarthritis.”



### Diet & Weight Management



**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

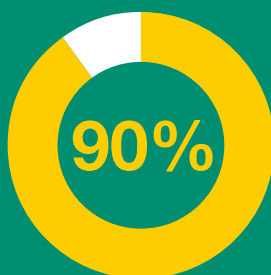
**97%** found Arthritis Action’s online resources helpful



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

“Good to hear from others with similar challenges, to learn from each other and share moral support.”

### 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

“I felt that the class was really beneficial to me at improving my self-confidence and willingness to push myself a little more. It was lovely to work with the instructor as he is so constructive and also to meet, albeit virtually, other Arthritis Action members and to exercise with them. I have really seen an improvement in my general mobility and I feel encouraged to build on this. I would recommend this class to all who are looking to improve strength, balance and mobility generally.”



## Personalised Member Pathway

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

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

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

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

“The Pathway, including excellent dietary advice, helped me to understand the condition and continue to work to lose weight and increase my general fitness. It is rare to get a bespoke service of this sort from a charity and I can thoroughly recommend it to others with arthritis.”

## Self-Management Events



“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.”

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

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

**90%** said the event helped improve their confidence

## Webinars



**100%** found the webinars useful

“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.”

## Events

**OVER 140 GROUP MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS** were organised this year, spread over 10 different regions and 23 locations. **2,520 PEOPLE ATTENDED** our Groups and presentations.



## PR

Reached over **40 MILLION PEOPLE**, coverage estimated to be worth **£242,000** in AVE.



## Social media

Our social media activity reached **1.1 MILLION PEOPLE**



## Jenny's Story

“I developed arthritis in 2002. When I was diagnosed, I was just glad to know what was wrong and just tried to start to manage it and listen to what the doctors said. I wasn’t told straight away what caused my arthritis, but over the years after reading up and researching, I found out it was stress.

The pain is so debilitating that at times I needed help getting up in the morning, but you still want to be a parent! Luckily, the support network I have is brilliant and they were able to stand in.

I found out about Arthritis Action in 2015, when I was invited to accompany a friend to their Members’ Conference. The information they provided was excellent! The speakers shared their own experiences, and I was really interested.

Arthritis Action has certainly helped me with the improvement of my health. Going to the doctors you hear the same thing all the time, year after year. They just focus on the arthritis. But living with arthritis, is so much more. Arthritis Action, and their Groups in particular, have made me more confident in myself in knowing how to deal with my chronic pain.

My health is completely different, because I feel I can manage it now. I feel as though I’m a different person.”

**JENNIFER MCKENZIE, 55**

# RESOURCES

## Organisational Capacity



At the time of going to publication, we have a staff team of 18 people. We plan to hire one new staff member each year to develop and deliver new areas of work. We have offices in London and Eastbourne, along with two Area Co-ordinators covering the Midlands & North and East Anglia Regions. We will consider hiring another Area Co-ordinator to cover a new region of the UK in the next three years. We are very grateful for the skills, time and support our volunteers give Arthritis Action, and are keen to work with more volunteers across the organisation.



## Financial Information



As our intention is to continue indefinitely to help people live active lives, free from the effects of arthritis and raise awareness of the impact of arthritis, our underlying long term policy is to maintain an adequate level of reserves and ensure that the level of cash reserves is appropriate to our operating costs and other commitments. However, to achieve our strategy for the next three years, the Trustees have set an ambitious budget that involves incurring annual expenditure which will exceed current operating income levels by approximately 250% per annum. Moreover, in order to achieve these growth plans, we intend to expand our existing income streams and develop new and innovative ones. We also plan to enhance supporter engagement and contribution through a more extensive variety of fundraising activities. To help facilitate these goals we have therefore recently devoted more resources to fundraising and secured additional fundraising expertise.



## SUMMARY

There are over 10 million people living with arthritis in the UK. There is currently no cure, and these numbers will continue to rise, so it is important that people affected by arthritis get the support they need and have the tools that can help them self-manage their condition. We are keen to offer a range of services, delivered both in-person and online, to meet the evolving needs of people living with arthritis.

We are led by our desire to run the Charity both efficiently and effectively, to not only meet the needs of people with arthritis and the wider MSK community, but also ensure that we are making the most of every pound that has been generously donated to us.

Good governance is important to us, so we will continue to invest in and review our practices and safeguard our finances. We will also continue to monitor our performance and measure our impact, to ensure that we are making a real difference for the communities we serve.

Thank you once again to our team, Trustees, Members, volunteers, supporters and partners for what we have achieved to-date, and we look forward to working together over the next three years to continue supporting people living with arthritis and other MSK conditions.

We are delighted to share our strategy with you and hope that everyone reading this plan will think about how they can support and join us to help make our vision a reality - to enable people to live active lives, free from the impact of arthritis. We would love to hear from you so please do get in touch by phone, email, or contact us through our website and social media channels.





**arthritisACTION.org.uk**

56 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6AE  
T: 020 3781 7120 E: [info@arthritisaction.org.uk](mailto:info@arthritisaction.org.uk)

Registered Charity Number: 292569. Company Number: 01914825  
Registered Office: 5 Cornfield Terrace, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 4NN

