

IMPACT REPORT

2024-25



FOREWORD

Welcome to our Impact Report 2024/2025.

The past year has continued to be challenging for many with arthritis, but not without hope as the Government’s 10 Year NHS Plan was unveiled in June and with it the promise of greater patient choice, better access to services and a focus on preventative healthcare. The need to involve the expertise of the voluntary sector was very much welcomed. As we complete the second year of our Strategic Plan, we continue to ensure that our self-management approach not only delivers, but adapts to the environment we work in.

Fundraising and corporate partnerships remain central to our financial sustainability and our ability to expand the services we provide. This year, we were honoured to be selected as the *Charity of the Year* by the Inner Wheel Clubs of Great Britain & Ireland, a wonderful collaboration that demonstrated the impact of a dedicated volunteer network. We are also grateful to all our sponsors and partners whose support has enabled us to deliver engagement programmes throughout the year.

The need for our services continues to grow as population ageing and modern lifestyles see a continued rise in numbers of those living with arthritis. We are proud to have directly supported over 12,000 people this year through 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; and our relaunched Personalised Member Pathway service.

We are pleased to have delivered 94 presentations to over 4,300 people. We delivered 62% of these to ethnic minority and low-income communities. Our work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) has not stopped there. We embedded EDI in our 2024-26 Strategy, amplifying our efforts to reach underserved communities and support

more people through our resources and services, digitally and in person. Our work in the community has been enhanced by a legacy gift for use in the Staffordshire area, resulting in a local project ‘Portraits of the Potteries’ featuring connected stories of arthritis telling the benefits of grassroots community support. A photography exhibition is planned in 2026.

Our website saw more than 432,000 page views this year, with the ‘arthritis and disability benefits’ page receiving 43,880 views, highlighting the continuing need for information on financial support, particularly pertinent in a year when the Government was reassessing benefits such as personal independent payments (PIP). We introduced a new “Work and Arthritis” section on our website to support both employees and employers in understanding and managing the impact of arthritis in the workplace. We also collaborated with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to highlight the importance of helping people of working age with arthritis remain economically active.

We have been proud to work with communications agency Blue Lozenge on understanding information and communications needs of both healthcare professionals and patients, with thanks to a grant from UCB Pharma. During the forthcoming year we will be targeting those areas for development including setting up a

Clinical Advisory Board to assist us with this important work.

We are delighted with progress made over the past year towards the strategic priorities we set out in our Three-Year Strategy, our resolve is now focussed on achieving the goals we set ourselves over the remaining year, 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 bring self-management to more, and help people live a happier, healthier life with arthritis.



Sarah Vickerstaff
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 long-standing 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 nutrition 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 an integrated 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:



Nutrition 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



Subsidised clinical appointments with our registered osteopaths, physiotherapists and acupuncturists



A six-week virtual exercise programme, aiming to build strength and support for joints, and our Movement Snacks video series



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



Our Personalised Member Pathway, 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



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

96% ARE SATISFIED WITH OUR SERVICES

“All the services that I have used have been very well run and of lasting benefit to me.”

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

To meet our strategic priorities, we delivered the following services in 2024/25:

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

Nutrition & Weight Management Service

100% satisfaction

92% are more knowledgeable about their arthritis

85% said the service brought them closer to reaching their weight/nutritional goals

85% would recommend the service

83% said the service helped improve their symptoms

“The dietitian was friendly and very easy to talk to.”



“Martin has been so very supportive, full of sound advice and helpful tips, even when I was despairing!”

“Martin was brilliant working out an eating plan for me and exercises too.”

Home Strength Class

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

87% felt stronger and better at managing daily tasks after the course



Personalised Member Pathway

The personalised pathway was re-launched in June 2025, participants currently undertaking the programme have said:



“The sessions are very helpful, helping me in my day-to-day with my diet, exercise and how to deal with my arthritis and giving me more knowledge about the service, I’m so grateful.”

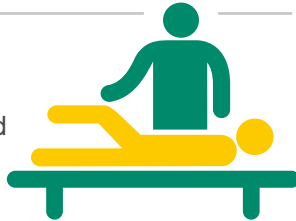
“These sessions are really constructive and supportive... I’m really glad I joined.”

Clinical Appointments

93% would recommend the Clinical Appointment service

93% agreed the service helped improve their daily experience of arthritis

92% agreed that they are better able to manage their condition following their appointments



“I found the hands-on treatment invaluable in getting the muscles loosened and working again and also advice on exercises to do at home. I now visit once a month to keep on top of tightness and other aches that can occur.”



Online Arthritis Action Groups

100% would recommend Arthritis Action Groups to a friend

90% reported improved confidence



“When I attended my first meeting, I was reminded that it’s okay to ask for help, most people enjoy being needed and like to be helpful. It was just the advice I needed. I am still thankful to the lady who said those words.”

“I really enjoyed the interaction with others in a similar situation.”

Self-Management Events & Courses

99% were likely to apply what they learnt in the course to their daily lives

94% agreed that these events help people better understand how to manage their arthritis

“Thank you to both presenters. They are both knowledgeable and engaging!”

“A well-balanced course of participant sharing and information.”



Events/Presentations

170 group meetings, events and presentations were organised this year

4,600+ people attended our Groups and presentations, including patients, carers, community organisations, corporate staff, healthcare professionals, and diverse communities)



“Thank you again for such an informative and helpful session. If I go by the conversations that followed your visit, it seems that several people took on board the advice and are reviewing their lifestyles.”

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



We have extended our resources for working-age adults with additional help for those who work in physical jobs. This included a campaign supported by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to highlight the needs of those with arthritis in the construction sector, and new information for individuals on avoiding workplace injuries. To complement these, we have given presentations to a variety of employers ranging from large organisations such as Heathrow Airport to specialist sectors such as VolkerWessels, to raise awareness of the condition and how employers can be more supportive of their employees with arthritis.

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

Associated Practitioners

We have a network of 142 osteopaths, physiotherapists and acupuncturists across the country, providing treatments for Members to help improve their symptoms.



Engaging All Healthcare Professionals

We partnered with Blue Lozenge to research the communication needs of secondary care professionals in rheumatology. This provided valuable insight into the resources needed to help patients access self-management information for arthritis. In addition, throughout the year we continued delivering presentations to GPs, patient participation groups, social prescribers, and Talking Therapy teams.



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

Podcast
5,807
plays across
platforms



"I love your podcasts"

"Your podcasts are fantastic, such a wealth of information."

Website

432,000
page views

We introduced new navigation to make our content more accessible.



Social media
Our social
media activity
reached over
1.9
million
people



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

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

We have met with people from diverse communities, including areas of low income and ethnic minority populations, the homeless, those who are socially isolated and African and Caribbean communities who have all been identified as the key groups more likely to have a long-term musculoskeletal condition and experience worse health outcomes.

To increase our impact in tackling health inequalities, we undertake the following activities each year:

Community outreach and presentations

We delivered 72 presentations to 2,978 people with arthritis across the UK, of which 26% 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.

Fundraising & Legacies

We were honoured to complete our 'Charity of the Year' term with Inner Wheel. Fundraising through their network of regional and local clubs raised a total of £24,000, and it was a pleasure to collaborate with and support such a passionate group of volunteers.

"Past President Heather Sheerin of The Association of Inner Wheel Clubs in GB&I selected Arthritis Action because its ethos is finely tuned to encourage, support and guide those with arthritis to get the best quality of life, and members of Inner Wheel embraced the charity wholeheartedly. Heather was lucky to have a wide network of support with her condition that others often don't have."

– Di Hylton, Inner Wheel

Partnerships

It has been an active year with several new and continuing partnerships bringing in project funding, sponsorship and new connections including:

AbbVie, Amgen, Department of Work & Pensions (DWP), Heathrow Airport, Lexis Nexis, Medac Pharma, UCB Pharma and VolkerWessels.

Fundraising
& Legacies
£492,948



DIANA'S STORY

"One day in 2018 aged 34, I had an odd incident while typing on my laptop; I found my fingers wouldn't move properly. It passed and I dismissed it, but this continued intermittently. By Christmas, my hands had become very painful.

My GP had initially been sceptical, talking of aches and pains. A different GP ordered blood tests, and then a hospital referral. I was given medication to start on, but it was the beginning of a stressful year before getting a diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis. After that things finally felt like they were moving forward. That year was the worst; the stress of the condition, the toll on my mental health, feeling dismissed by medical professionals, not knowing what it was or what would help. All the things that might have helped me

de-stress; the gym, knitting, baking I just couldn't do.

I was grateful to find Arthritis Action, and particularly the online groups, which have been incredibly supportive. Prior to then, I hadn't met anyone else my age with arthritis, so it was quite isolating. Talking with those in similar situations provides social and practical support. Whether it is sharing tips about gadgets, therapies or treatments.

My life has changed so much. I have carers to help with dressing, washing up etc. I know the limits of my mobility, I walk my dog around the park and opt for my mobility scooter for longer journeys.

My condition has changed my perspective on life and plans. Studying has been something that

has filled my days with purpose. My university has been incredibly helpful and supportive in ensuring I have full access to my course despite my disabilities. The Disabled Student Allowance provides money to suppliers for special equipment taxis to classes and a note-taker for my lectures.

The long-term future is uncertain, so I tend to focus on the day-to-day. Arthritis Action has helped with understanding the things I can control particularly pacing myself but knowing when to rest."

Diana Kemp





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

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