



Impact Report 2024/2025



Introduction

At Arthritis UK, we're determined to bring about positive and lasting change for everyone living with the challenges of arthritis in the UK.

Following the publication of our five-year strategic plan in 2023, we've been working closely with our community to make sure we're united and focused on achieving our goals of improving prevention, diagnosis and treatment, helping people to live well with arthritis and increasing awareness.

To do this, we must continually evaluate and evolve the impact we're making for and with people with arthritis, but to do that, we must first understand more about our current levels of impact.

This is Arthritis UK's first published organisational impact report. It's the first

time we've been able to visually show the difference we're making for people living with arthritis.

A significant proportion of our data is based on survey responses – we have enough data to be confident that this reflects overall views, but it's worth noting that not everyone who interacts with us will have completed a survey.

We'll continue to learn from and develop our work, to make sure everyone with arthritis can live the life they choose.



Services

Arthritis UK delivers a range of services to adults, young people, children and their families, and healthcare and workplace professionals.

In 2024/25, our staff and volunteers delivered 302 self-management sessions, supporting people living with arthritis to manage their condition. Over six weeks, participants learn about lifestyle changes, ways to communicate with friends, family and healthcare professionals, and how to exercise safely with arthritis. Alongside our self-management courses, **1,072** information and bitesize support sessions were delivered across the UK.



So much information [was] given about how to cope with your condition.

Information Support Talk attendee,
South England, March 2025



[The best thing was] meeting with other people and learning new things. I love the fact that everyone in the room has some sort of condition. Everyone is here to try and help themselves.

Self-Management course attendee,
Northern Ireland, October 2024



94%
of service users
would recommend
Arthritis UK to others.

80%
said that attending a self-management
course improved their understanding
of arthritis.

71%
of self-management service attendees
feel more able to reduce the impact
that arthritis has on their lives.

80%
of attendees said they were more
aware of where to get support for
their condition following one of our
information sessions.



As part of our services and advice, we try to give people more confidence to talk about their arthritis, whether that be with their friends and family or when talking to healthcare professionals. **Almost three quarters** of survey respondents reported an improvement in their ability to be open with others.¹



It has given me more confidence in speaking out and being ok with myself if I can't do something.

Self-Management course attendee,
Northern Ireland, May 2024

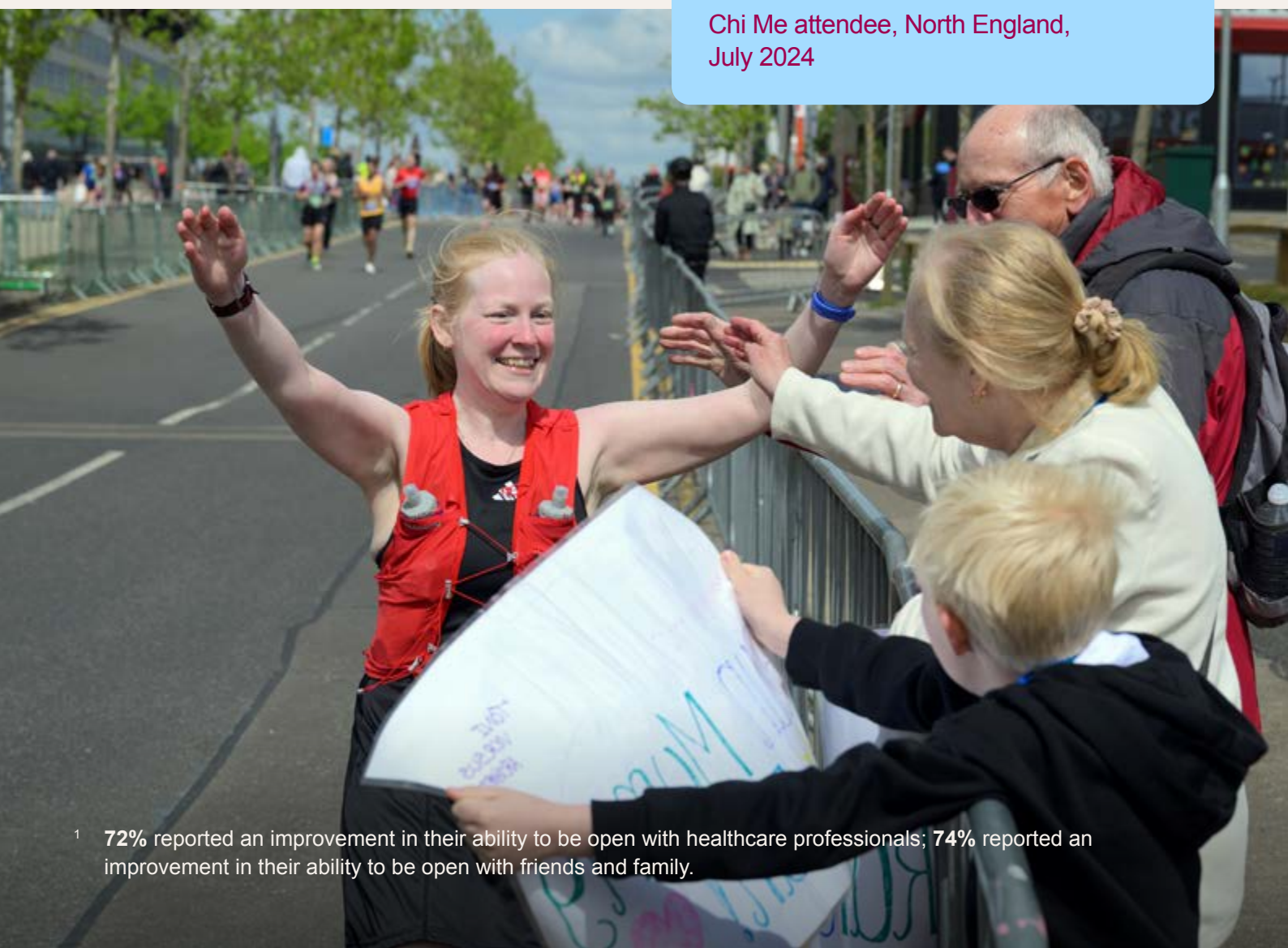
After attending our physical activity sessions, **nearly three quarters** of participants said that they had increased the amount of physical activity they do in their day-to-day lives.

One of the questions we ask people before they start a session is whether they do any exercise to help manage their arthritis pain. Over the last year, we found that only **27%** said yes, but following the session this increased to just under half (**46%**).



Makes me feel good about myself. I like the chat afterwards with others in the group. [The instructor] gives some new ideas and makes it fun.

Chi Me attendee, North England,
July 2024



¹ 72% reported an improvement in their ability to be open with healthcare professionals; 74% reported an improvement in their ability to be open with friends and family.

Helpline

In 2024/25, our trained Helpline advisors answered **20,790** telephone calls and emails from people looking for help and information on arthritis.

A survey sent to people following an interaction with the Helpline reported that **almost half** of respondents said their pain is so bad that it has a significant impact on carrying out daily activities². The good news is that just over half of respondents (57%) said that contacting our Helpline improved their ability to reduce the impact of their condition on their day-to-day lives.



[The Helpline advisor] I spoke to was wonderful...kind, caring, sympathetic and unhurried in her conversation, we spoke for an hour and I felt a lifting of my spirits and a will to go on!

Helpline caller, North England,
March 2025



[The best part about contacting the Helpline was] lots of specialist info in one place in plain English.

Helpline email, South England,
February 2025



It was really good to discuss my concerns with a member of Versus Arthritis [now Arthritis UK]. I was given help and advice about what I could do moving forward. The call gave me confidence that there are a lot of things I can try out to help me cope. A very positive experience.

Helpline caller, North England,
January 2025



20,790
Helpline enquiries answered.

² In the past three months, how much has the pain you experience interfered with your daily activities, where 0 = no impact on me and 10 = unable to carry on any activities: 8/10 **23.89%**, 9/10 **9.98%**, 10/10 **12.85%**.

Young People and Families service

Our Young People and Families service offers support to people under the age of 26 who are living with arthritis, along with their family network. We offer one-to-one conversations as well as fun events, self-management workshops, youth voice activities and residential weekends, creating safe spaces for young people and their families to connect with others.

Over the last year, we welcomed **1,581** attendees across **93** activities, workshops and residential events. We also offered **3,724** support and information sessions for young people and parents/carers in hospitals and communities across the UK, as well as digitally, through our one-to-one work.



If you're thinking of doing it go for it, it's so worth the experience. You get to meet young people that understand your condition and give you tips and advice making you realise you're not alone. It may be scary at first, but you will just get to know everyone, and no one is ever left out.

North England Residential attendee,
Aged 13 or over, May 2024

**Young
People &
Families**



94%

of our young attendees would recommend our activities, workshops and residential events to others.

77%

of our young people say that they feel better able to manage their symptoms and feel more confident in being themselves after attending one of our events or residential weekends. Our work outside of events also helped people feel more informed and supported.



My daughter has always felt better after leaving a session or after participating in an event.

Parent of a young person accessing support sessions with a Young People and Families worker

Training for healthcare professionals

By training current and future healthcare and workplace professionals, we aim to improve the treatment and care that people living with arthritis receive. We deliver both Core Skills workshops and Patient Voice sessions, as well as providing access to online resources.

In the last year, we delivered face-to-face and online training sessions to **1,367** healthcare professionals and students, and our self-learning resources were accessed **189,275** times.



Best study day I've attended in a long time. Came away feeling I'd learnt something and more confident about tackling tricky topics with patients.

Advanced Nurse Practitioner and Core Skills attendee, Wales, September 2024



I have been re-enthused. I think it has enhanced my communication skills, and I have loads of great resources to share with patients.

GP and Core Skills attendee, North England, October 2024



99%
of our Core Skills attendees (healthcare professionals) would recommend the training to others.³

92%
of attendees are very likely to signpost their patients to our resources.

50%
average improvement in knowledge of arthritis for our Core Skills attendees.

³ Based on **202** survey responses

Policy and influencing

We campaign to make sure that arthritis is seen as a national priority. We want governments and health services to take arthritis seriously, so that everyone can access the diagnosis, treatment and support they need, wherever they live in the UK. And 2024 was our biggest campaigning year yet. Our highlights include:

We hosted two parliamentary events to help build our network of Arthritis MP Champions – MPs who support our work and take action for people with arthritis. Around **80 MPs** from across the UK attended and were able to speak to some of our campaigners, hearing directly what it's like to live with arthritis and the changes needed to help them live the lives they choose.

For the last eight years, we've been campaigning to make musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions a priority in Wales and during 2024-25 we made significant progress. Highlights include the **Welsh Government's Waiting Well Policy**⁴ – putting in place a 'Single Point of Contact' (SPOC) call centre in each Health Board in Wales to support people on waiting

lists, and ensuring more people in Wales with arthritis are now signposted to our suite of Arthritis UK information resources. **The National Strategic Clinical MSK Network**⁵, **MSK Framework**⁶, and **Multi-professional MSK Capability Framework**⁷ were all launched in October 2024, to coincide with World Arthritis Day. These frameworks will help to improve standards in MSK healthcare in Wales, and define the capabilities required by healthcare professionals (HCPs) to meet the needs of people with MSK conditions in primary care settings.

None of this would have been possible without great teamwork across Arthritis UK, including our Changemaker volunteers and people with arthritis who shared their stories and supported our campaigns.



187,639
campaign actions were
taken in 2024/25.

⁴ <https://www.gov.wales/promote-prevent-and-prepare-planned-care-html>

⁵ <https://executive.nhs.wales/functions/networks-and-planning/musculoskeletal-conditions/>

⁶ <https://executive.nhs.wales/functions/networks-and-planning/musculoskeletal-conditions/msk-docs/living-with-arthritis-and-musculoskeletal-conditions-in-wales-a-framework-for-the-future/>

⁷ <https://heiw.nhs.wales/education-and-training/primary-care/musculoskeletal-capability-framework-for-wales/>



In Northern Ireland, our Waiting Well policy work has been making a real difference to people on long waiting lists for treatment. Our contact with Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) has resulted in a steady increase of Assembly Questions relating to musculoskeletal health and waiting times being submitted to the health minister. This is an important step in pushing for change and making this issue a political priority. We held a Waiting Well Roundtable at Stormont to bring together the health minister, senior policy makers, professional bodies, and MLAs to explore actions and strategies to support people who are waiting for treatment. As a result of this event, the **Department**

of Health made a commitment to better patient communication and support as part of its Elective Care Framework, a huge win for people with arthritis in Northern Ireland.

In Scotland, we published our ACHE (Arthritis Community Health Engagement) report called *Putting the Pieces Together in Drumchapel*, demonstrating the importance of support within (and by) communities to help improve the lives of people living with arthritis. The report was featured in media stories across Scotland and was also acknowledged by the Scottish parliament through a motion submitted by a local MSP.



Research

During 2024/25, we awarded £16.6 million across new research projects, bringing our total investment over the past 20 years to more than £367 million.

The success of our research continues to help improve our understanding of arthritis conditions, bringing hope for potential new treatments and driving real-world change for people with arthritis. Our highlights from the past year are taken from both in-depth analysis of our investments, and some exciting new breakthroughs.

Rituximab for ANCA (Anti-Neutrophil Cytoplasmic Antibody) vasculitis: A randomised controlled trial called RITAZAREM was funded by us in 2011 to compare the biologic treatment Rituximab to standard immunosuppression therapy in ANCA vasculitis. The trial found that Rituximab was superior to the current standard treatments in maintaining remission, and these findings have now **resulted in international guideline changes**, prioritising the use of Rituximab in the treatment of ANCA vasculitis.^{8, 9}

Potential methotrexate use in osteoarthritis: The PROMOTE clinical trial has shown that methotrexate, a medicine already used for autoimmune conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, is **effective in relieving both the pain and stiffness caused by knee osteoarthritis**. These findings offer hope for new approaches to pain management for millions of people living with osteoarthritis, with future research helping to identify who might benefit from this medicine.

Development of care guidelines for young people with MSK-related conditions:

Analysis of the impact of our world-first Centre for Adolescent Rheumatology highlighted the critical role they've played in **improving the care of young people**. The Centre supported the development of the first British care guidelines specifically tailored for young people with conditions such as psoriatic arthritis, Sjögren disease, and idiopathic inflammatory myopathy. They also helped to develop a medicine called secukinumab (Cosentyx™) now approved across the UK and EU to treat some forms of juvenile idiopathic arthritis.

We have individual research impact reports from many of our Research Centres available here: arthritis-uk.org/our-research/our-research-impact/our-research-centres



£16.6m
awarded across new
research projects
during 2024/25.

⁸ <https://ard.bmj.com/content/83/1/30>

⁹ https://app.overton.io/document.php?policy_document_id=awmf-9a68a9ebaa6f4a1094c36b520e844e9f

Research partners

Our research partners are a group of individuals with lived experience of arthritis conditions who work in partnership with us to make decisions about our research.



80%

of our research partners agreed that they are confident that we take their input into account when making decisions.

85%

of our research partners feel they have made a difference to our work.



I'm connected to an organisation that is making a real impact.

Research partner



Patients provide different and important perspectives; they can also provide excellent endorsement and encouragement to pursue certain research questions. Additionally, early career researchers in the lab appreciate discussing their work with patients and vice versa. Both parties feel appreciated and valued.

Researcher funded by Arthritis UK



Our year in numbers



67,693

acts of support delivered for people with arthritis.



20,790

Helpline enquiries answered.

26,660

people attended one of our UK delivery sessions (including information, self-management and physical activity).



1,367

healthcare professionals and students accessed our face-to-face or online training.

189,275

healthcare and workplace professionals accessed our self-learning resources.



187,639

campaign actions taken.

378

volunteers helped to deliver our services.



102

applicants funded across 20 research awards.

Over 1.2m

information booklets delivered to and downloaded by people with arthritis.



130

research partners, an increase from last year.



Next steps

At Arthritis UK, we have taken huge steps over the last couple of years to improve the way we measure our impact. We are starting to see where we are making the biggest difference, but we can also note areas that need to be reviewed or developed further. We will continue to evolve our impact work to help us see where and how we are making the biggest difference to people's lives.



Thank you

Thank you to everyone who has made this report possible:

- Everyone who has taken the time to complete one of our surveys.
- Our amazing community of volunteers, campaigners, fundraisers, and supporters.
- The incredible people with arthritis who share their stories.
- Health and care professionals who have attended our training and championed our services.
- Our dedicated network of researchers.
- The wonderful people who help to fund our work.
- Our internal teams.
- And everyone who supports our vision of creating a future free from arthritis.

If you need support, please contact the Helpline on **0800 5200 520**, email **helpline@arthritis-uk.org** or visit the online community.



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