

Healthcare professionals – Scotland



VERSUS ARTHRITIS

A summary of Versus Arthritis services for health and social care professionals and organisations.

At Versus Arthritis, it is our ambition that one day, no one will have to live with the pain, fatigue and isolation caused by arthritis.

Our patient insight tells us how important interactions with healthcare professionals are to the lived experience of people with arthritis. We offer a range of training, resources and support services to healthcare professionals to support you and your continued professional development. We can also offer a range of support and resources to your patients.

This leaflet has been written for individual health care professionals, Health Boards, Health & Social Care Partnerships, and other stakeholders in health and social care in Scotland. This publication provides a summary of the wide range of services offered by Versus Arthritis in Scotland to support people living with arthritis across our communities. Health and social care professionals can signpost into and/or embed our services into their service delivery pathways. Versus Arthritis is keen to explore opportunities to strengthen partnership working with healthcare professionals and service providers across Scotland to supplement and support existing services to improve quality of life, support self-management and to maximise independence of people with arthritis.

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Our vision

A future free from Arthritis.

Our mission

We won't rest until everyone with arthritis has access to the treatments and support they need to live the life they choose with real hope of a cure in the future.

To deliver our mission we invest in world-class research, deliver high-quality services and campaign on the issues that matter most to people with arthritis.

Over 10 million people in the UK live with arthritis. Every day around one thousand people are diagnosed with osteoarthritis, the most common form of arthritis, and every month over 2,000 people are diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis.

Many more live with arthritis but remain undiagnosed, untreated and unsupported.

As we work towards our ultimate vision – a future free from arthritis – our five-year strategy aims to empower people with arthritis to live well now, and to offer hope through our ongoing commitment to finding better treatments now and cures in the future.

As a charity, we will do this by investing in world-class research, delivering high-quality services, and campaigning on issues that matter most to people with arthritis.

Our work will not be easy and we know that we cannot do this alone, so partnership and collaboration will be at the core of how we work and behave. We look forward to working side by side with our volunteers, supporters and partners, in all four nations of the UK. We will also proactively seek and develop partnerships in areas where we want to do more, including with people and organisations working with underserved communities.

The support of healthcare professionals, like you, will be vital in helping us deliver our mission. Find out more about the support we can offer you and the people you care for and how to get involved in our work. Join us.



Scan the QR code to Read our strategy in full.

10 MILLION

Over 10 million people in the UK have arthritis.



Arthritis and MSK conditions are a leading cause of disability.

23.3 MILLION

working days were lost in 2021 due to arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions.

The Health Development team at Versus Arthritis can provide resources, education and support that will help you to help people with arthritis.

Information

When you join our **professional network**, you'll become part of a growing community of healthcare professionals dedicated to pushing back against arthritis. We'll keep you up to date on the latest developments in MSK health and care, and share practical tips, development opportunities and resources.

Education and training

Our **Core Skills in Musculoskeletal Care** programme helps primary healthcare professionals build confidence in diagnosing and supporting people with MSK conditions. The programme consists of an e-learning course designed in partnership with the Royal College of General Practitioners, as well as digital and practical workshops which are delivered across the UK. Core Skills will help you master the basics of examinations and consultations.

Get access to free, **high-quality webinars** designed for GPs and other healthcare providers who diagnose and manage MSK conditions. Together with the medical education provider Red Whale, we've created these webinars to help you deliver the best care.

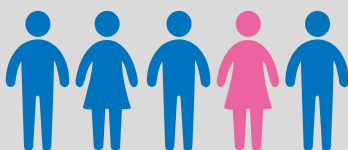
Our Guide to the **Clinical Assessment of Patients with Musculoskeletal Conditions** and our new **Children and Young People Assessment Guide** are endorsed by the British Society for Rheumatology and the British Orthopaedic Association. These guides give you a step-by-step approach to assessing people with MSK conditions.



Scan the QR code to sign up to our Professional Network and access our Education and training resources.

For more information on any of these services, please get in touch at:

ProfessionalEngagement@VersusArthritis.org



Each year one in five people consult a GP about a musculoskeletal condition.



We have over 11,000 people in our professional network.



156,000

Our resources and training products were accessed by healthcare professionals 156,000 times in 22/23.

As well as our core education, training and engagement offer for healthcare professionals across the UK, we also have dedicated support for healthcare professionals in Scotland. We are working collaboratively with healthcare professionals to develop and grow networks and relationships within Scotland. We want to ensure we develop the right education and support so that people with arthritis have the best experience they can when navigating a clinical pathway.

We can provide information to our local services and support, look at innovative ways for working in partnership to identify service improvements for the future, and share best practice within Scotland and across the UK.

We can facilitate the involvement of people with lived experience through our Patient Voice Programme.

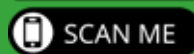
Patient Voice

The service supports both healthcare professionals in training and in practice to understand and empathise with what it is to have and live with a musculoskeletal (MSK) condition and/or persistent pain, and ultimately improve the service they provide to patients. We can also integrate signposting and referral information for Versus Arthritis resources, services and professional

network as an addition to these sessions to complete the approach.

Patient Voice sessions can take place online and face to face, with students and practitioners, structured conversations. conducting mock consultations and pre-recorded video diaries or interviews with course or professional development leads. All partnerships are co-designed with the educator, students and volunteers.

The “patient” was really enthusiastic and the students were able to establish a great rapport with her. She was well informed about her medical condition and was able to provide lots of information for the students. They all really enjoyed it!



Scan the QR code to join our network of healthcare professionals across the UK.

Or email:

ProfessionalEngagement@VersusArthritis.org to connect with the Scotland team directly.

How could Versus Arthritis support you to deliver high quality great musculoskeletal care in your local setting?



Education packages.



Information to support patient consultations.



Local branch/group/support.

Versus Arthritis has produced a suite of support tools to help people with back, shoulder, hip and knee pain. These tools were developed by Versus Arthritis with support from the Primary Care Centre Versus Arthritis at Keele University and funding from NHS England.

How to use the tools

The tools are designed to support consultations between patients and their healthcare professionals. They are a set of questions which encourage people to think about what types of support they need to help them with their musculoskeletal health problem.

Patients can use these to prepare for appointments, during appointments, or both. Each tool sets out the treatment options for that condition and summarises what is known about the potential benefits and risks of each option. They are intended to facilitate discussion, not to guide people towards a particular option.

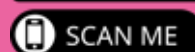
For more information about the tools and how they were developed, please visit:

[VersusArthritis.org/DST](https://www.versusarthritis.org/DST)

Our resources

There are eight tools, all available to download as PDFs:

- [Making decisions about my back pain: primary care and self-care](#)
- [Making decisions about my back pain: thinking about a referral](#)
- [Making decisions about my shoulder pain: primary care and self-care](#)
- [Making decisions about my shoulder pain: thinking about a referral](#)
- [Making decisions about my hip pain: primary care and self-care](#)
- [Making decisions about my hip pain: thinking about a referral](#)
- [Making decisions about my knee pain: primary care and self-care](#)
- [Making decisions about my knee pain: thinking about a referral](#)



Or scan the QR code.



It is acknowledged that people with arthritis face considerable challenges staying in work or returning to the workplace. However, with the right information and support these challenges can be overcome.

Employers and workplace professionals can be key to facilitating and supporting people with arthritis or related MSK conditions to work well.

Versus Arthritis Workplace Health Development aims to improve work outcomes for people with arthritis and MSK conditions by:

- Supporting research into work.
- Engaging with workplace professionals to identify gaps in work-related training and resources.
- Developing key work-related information resources and training for employers and workplace professionals.

To complement this, we aim to:

- Establish work-related issues and views of people with arthritis.
- Develop clear work-related information and signposting for people living and working with arthritis.

This work will be supported by workplace professionals and people with arthritis to ensure that the resources developed help improve work capacity and outcomes for people with arthritis.

Support for employers

Key to helping employees work well is support from their employer. To aid this we offer 'Understanding Arthritis and Work' sessions to employers and service providers, aiming to dispel the myths and improve understanding of the condition.

Contact us

Email: WorkingWell@VersusArthritis.org

**20% LESS
LIKELY**

People with arthritis are 20% less likely to be in work than someone without arthritis.


1 IN 3

employees with a long-term condition have not discussed their MSK condition with their employer.

23.3M

working days were lost in 2021 due to MSK conditions.

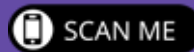


MSK conditions are the third most common reason for working days lost, behind 'Other' (including COVID-19) and 'Minor Illnesses'.

Research shows us that engaging in physical activity and movement reduces pain, improves quality of life and strengthens the muscles and joints. Versus Arthritis' Let's Move programme facilitates a way for people to incorporate movement into their everyday lives, empowering people with arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions to move in a good way for them.

Let's Move is our digital programme tailor-made for people with arthritis to help them on their physical activity journey. We have developed several series of videos featuring experts and people with arthritis. They include:

- Let's Move with Leon
- Stretching Series
- Let's Move for Surgery
- Monthly challenges with Leon
- Myth busting blogs, animations, and podcasts
- Peer-to-peer Let's Move Facebook group
- Let's Move Newsletter.



Scan the QR code to visit our 'Exercising with arthritis' page.

Other resources:

- Let's Move Facebook Group
- Exercise Sheets
- Let's Move with Leon
- Let's Move newsletter
- Stretching Series
- Let's Move for Surgery

6 IN 10



people (60%) surveyed with MSK conditions reported using physical activity as a way to manage their symptoms.

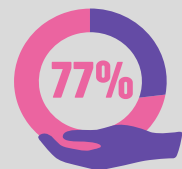
7 IN 10



people (70%) surveyed with MSK conditions said they would like to be more active.



people (36%) surveyed with MSK conditions who were active at least once a week said they exercised because it helped them with their pain.



people (77%) surveyed with MSK conditions said they want practical support to help them to be more physically active.

Support Services

The **Versus Arthritis Helpline** is here to help you to support your patients.

Your patients don't need to face arthritis alone. Our advisors aim to bring all of the information and advice about arthritis into one place to provide tailored support for people affected by arthritis.



Helpline Freephone 0800 520 0520

Monday–Friday, 9am–6pm (excluding bank holidays).



They can also email us

Helpline@VersusArthritis.org

So many people don't understand what it's like to live with a condition that can have such a huge but hidden impact on your life, but we do.



One place you'll always find a friendly ear or an answer to a question is our

[Online Community](#)

This community is for people affected by arthritis to feel safe and supported.



Scan the QR code to order our information.

For assistance or if you wish to order more than 500 booklets, please call **0800 515 209.**

“I wish to thank the person who answered the phone to me several weeks ago, they had a sympathetic ear. And the result is I have a new chapter opened up in my life – from one of extreme shock to putting into practice some of the suggestions.”

“Thank you for your wealth of information. I feel more confident now that I can weather the storm until my surgery.”

“Finally had the courage to call VA, I cannot recommend their helpline or should I say lifeline enough.”



76%

of people that come to the Helpline feel they have a better understanding of their condition.



88%

of people contacting the Helpline felt satisfied with the information they received.

Our services in Scotland work alongside people with arthritis, community groups, health, and social care professionals to deliver a framework of support across our Nation.

We support people living with arthritis and other long-term conditions to learn practical skills and techniques to manage their condition and live well.

We help people to **get active and stay active**, to help them self-manage their condition. Our sessions are led by trained peer volunteers.

Tai Chi: Gentle flowing movements designed for all abilities to improve balance, reduce pain, and improve coordination.

“I find the session relaxing, lower my stress level and calming..”

Seated Yoga: Can improve joint mobility and muscular strength, as well as flexibility –

“Really enjoyed the chair yoga and continuing to do it. Really helps loosen up the joints and...the instructor was very good and understanding.”

We help to **reduce loneliness and isolation** through our peer-led walking groups supported by Paths For All. Walking improves mental health, helps to strengthen joints and enables people to get out in their community and connect with others, reducing their isolation.

“I feel it’s helped very much so, because it’s not just your physical, it’s your mental health as well.”

Our self management support through Bitesize sessions and tailored programmes ensure people with arthritis have a voice and control over their care and support.

- We work in Partnership – facilitating effective collaboration to deliver support within and across communities with organisations, groups and health and care professionals.
- We provide support with accessibility – improving the information and advice available to people with arthritis to help them access the right support at the right time.
- We promote and facilitate independence – by building individuals’ confidence to know who to turn to, access trusted information and advice.

Contact us

Email Livewell@VersusArthritis.org
or visit [Scotland | Versus Arthritis](#)

We also regularly update our Facebook page with new activities. [Scotland Versus Arthritis | Glasgow | Facebook](#)



257,654

people in Scotland have OA of the Hip.



423,470

have knee OA.



20%

of people with OA experience depression and anxiety.



1 IN 3

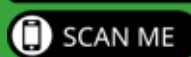
people in Britain (34%) aged 46–68 live with multiple LTCs.

The Young People and Families Service at Versus Arthritis offers a range of support services for young people with arthritis and MSK conditions and their families across Scotland. Our support ranges from one-to-one support within adult and paediatric rheumatology clinics, and a programme of self-management residentials and workshops.

We run 3 self-management programmes for young people aged 10–25 in Scotland:

- **Joint Creativity** – For young people aged 10–18, exploring self-management through art at 1-day workshops, art camp and culminating with a public exhibition each year.
- **Take Control** – For young people aged 10–18, exploring self-management through topic-based residentials and 1-day workshops, including confidence building, wellbeing, sleep and pain management, activity-focussed events and a weekend for families.
- **Joint Potential** – For young adults aged 16–25, exploring self-management through topic-based residentials, including building confidence, managing change, planning for the future, relationships and an activity-focussed weekend.

You can refer patients up to the age of 25 with a diagnosis of juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) or another musculoskeletal (MSK) condition to the Young People and Families Service. We can also assist with support and signposting for families and young people under the age of 10.



Scan the QR code for information on our offer across the UK for young people.

Read more about our work and its impact.

Joint Potential Evaluation report:

[VersusArthritis.org/Joint-Potential](https://www.versusarthritis.org/joint-potential)

Contact the young people and families team:

YPFScotland@VersusArthritis.org

Refer patients to the young people and families service using this form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/CQzCsJDSk0>



1 IN 1,000

young people under the age of 16 are diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis.

78%

Of young people who accessed the service feel more positive about their condition.



89%

of young people who accessed the service feel more able to manage their condition.



At Versus Arthritis, we invest in world-leading science, across the translational spectrum: from fundamental discovery science to fully understand arthritis, through to clinical trials to test more targeted and personalised treatments, to their eventual implementation in health services and social care.

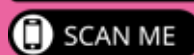
We also have a commitment to support both clinical and academic researchers in their research careers. All our funding calls are open to healthcare professionals, including our Career Development Fellowships (CDF). These allow researchers to carry on the important work they do to help forward MSK research.

Recently, we spoke to one our CDF award holders, Jim Dunham, a senior registrar, and clinical lecturer in anaesthetics, about what his CDF award has done for his career:

“The fellowship is my stepping stone to independent research. It provides me with research funding as I move from a senior trainee into a consultant role, which is often a precarious transition for research-active clinicians. Crucially, it also provides funding for our patient partners who will contribute to the design of experiments, the hardware, and the software, so that the final multi-contact recording system fully meets their

needs and can be seamlessly integrated into clinical practice.”

In 2019 we established our Research Advisory Groups which bring together people with lived experience of arthritis, researchers, and healthcare professionals to help guide our research priorities.



Scan the QR code to read about our research.

You can also find out about:

- Our research strategy
- Research funding opportunities
- How you can get involved

The State of Musculoskeletal Health is a collection of the most up-to-date, UK-wide statistics on arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions. Find out more:

VersusArthritis.org/somh

Email: **ResearchLiaison@VersusArthritis.org**

£14.16m 

of research investment in Scotland, split between 26 different awards (Accurate Feb 2023).



Two of our Centres of Excellence are led by Researchers in Scotland: Health and Work Centre (Aberdeen), and the Research into Inflammatory Arthritis Centre (Glasgow). The Tissue Engineering & Regenerative Therapies Centre includes researchers from the University of Aberdeen.

The pain of MSK conditions affects all aspects of life – from family life to employment, and from social life to independence. Yet, in society, arthritis is often dismissed as an inevitable part of aging or shrugged off as ‘just a bit of arthritis’.

We bring together people with arthritis, volunteers, healthcare professionals and other stakeholders to campaign for arthritis to be the prioritised healthcare issue it should be in Scotland.

On a practical level, our policy and influencing activity aims to be part of the solution to making healthcare for people with arthritis and related conditions in Scotland the best it can be. Using Versus Arthritis’ insight into the day-to-day experience of living with MSK conditions and your professional experience of both challenges and best practice in service delivery, we can work together to shape policy, influence government and improve patient outcomes.

Campaigning on key issues like NHS waiting times, responding to consultations, convening focus groups, taking part in working groups, engaging in communities and facilitating discussion across health care, our Policy and Influencing team is here to support and influence health and social care policy and provision in Scotland.



Although prevalent across all areas of society, musculoskeletal conditions have a greater prevalence in the most deprived communities. **22%** report a long-term MSK condition in the most deprived area of Scotland compared to **11%** in the least deprived.



Scan the QR code for information about policy and campaigning.

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter and join our Campaigns Network for regular campaign updates and actions.

[Facebook.com/ScotlandVersusArthritis](https://www.facebook.com/ScotlandVersusArthritis)

[Twitter.com/ScotVArthritis](https://twitter.com/ScotVArthritis)

Contact us:

Email: **Scotland@VersusArthritis.org**



A study on the data collected by an MSK helpline/triage system in Scotland found that, of those who called, people from the most deprived areas reported higher levels of pain compared to those in the least deprived areas.

There are an estimated 20.3 million people in the UK with arthritis or a related musculoskeletal (MSK) condition. Around 1 in 3 people worldwide live with one or more of these conditions and their impact for individuals and society is profound.

The pain and disability caused by arthritis results in a substantial loss in quality of life, accounting for 22% of the total burden of ill health in the UK. The cost of working days lost due to osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis alone was estimated at £2.58 billion in 2017 and is predicted to rise to £3.43 billion by 2030.

FOLLOW US



For more information please visit our [website](#)

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**WE ARE
VERSUS
ARTHRITIS**



Registered with/Cofrestrwyd gyda'r



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