

## INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT AND POLICY TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH ARTHRITIS

Arthritis Research UK is working to influence government and policy to support people with musculoskeletal conditions. Here are examples of some of our recent projects and their impact.

### Putting arthritis at the heart of policy-making

- We worked with the Department of Health and people with arthritis to publish a report into personal health budgets. This is a person-centred approach to budgets in health care, giving people greater control. Our report has been extensively quoted by other reports.
- Our Medical Director gave evidence to the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee on sport and exercise science.
- We published a policy report with other leading charities on the prevalence of depression among people living with long term conditions such as arthritis.
- We worked in partnership with the British Society for Rheumatology and Department of Health to develop a Best Practice Tariff for early inflammatory arthritis, including rheumatoid arthritis. The tariff will create an incentive for hospitals to ensure that people get the right treatment at the right time. It was introduced in the NHS in England from April 2013.
- We held a workshop with the Department of Health to learn more about people with arthritis' awareness of their rights within the NHS Constitution when awaiting a joint replacement operation. Following the workshop, the NHS Standard Contract has been changed and will now include standard information about their right to treatment within 18 weeks of referral on the first outpatient appointment letter.

### Raising awareness of arthritis in Parliament

- We support and work with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Medical Research to jointly raise the profile of medical research and its impact in Parliament.
- We have an ongoing series of face-to-face meetings with parliamentarians. We are appreciative of parliamentarians who have then chosen to raise the issue of arthritis and musculoskeletal health in Parliament.
- We have held parliamentary briefing events about arthritis myths and osteoarthritis in primary care.

### Improving data about musculoskeletal health

- Working with the musculoskeletal (MSK) and NHS community, we have commissioned the development of the Musculoskeletal Patient Reported Outcome Measure (M-PROM) that aims to capture the health status of people living with arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions.
- We brought together academics and other stakeholders to develop an online tool – the MSK calculator – which will produce local estimates of the burden of arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions for local authorities and health and care professionals.
- We contributed to analysing the musculoskeletal data in the Chief Medical Officer's 2011 report on the status of the nation's health. The report provides important evidence by highlighting that national data on musculoskeletal conditions is difficult to obtain and that osteoarthritis is an "unrecognised public health priority."

### Working collaboratively for change with other charities

- We are active members of many different groups and alliances, including the Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance (ARMA), the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), the Falls and Fractures Alliance and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).
- We successfully campaigned with other charities for an exemption for charities from the 'charity tax'.

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