



## ARMA: The Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance

ARMA is the alliance providing a collective voice for the arthritis and musculoskeletal community in the UK. The Alliance comprises the major national patient-led charities, professional bodies and research organisations active in this area, as well as patient-led charities focusing on rare and complex musculoskeletal disorders.



Musculoskeletal conditions are the single biggest cause of disability and pain across the UK, leading to 30.6 million working days being lost each year. Much of this is avoidable with the right interventions at the right time.

Good musculoskeletal health – healthy muscles, joints and bones working well together – is essential to carrying out daily activities with ease and without pain, and remaining independent and socially and economically active for longer.

### **Musculoskeletal conditions:**

- Account for 21% of GP visits in the UK.
- Affect more than 10 million adults and around 15,000 children in the UK.
- Have an enormous impact on the quality of life of millions of people.
- Are associated with a large number of co-morbidities, including diabetes, depression and obesity.

The burden of musculoskeletal conditions is set to increase, with an ageing population and rising levels of obesity and physical disability.

### **Biggest Wins for Health and Social Care**

Due to the cost, impact, prevalence and degree of co-morbidity of musculoskeletal conditions, investing in quality improvement can greatly benefit patients. Relatively simple interventions can also greatly improve outcomes for people, increase value to the NHS and reduce unwarranted variation.

### **Right Care, Right Place, Right Time**

Effectively tackling musculoskeletal conditions requires:

- Musculoskeletal conditions to be regarded as a priority, highlighted in all national strategies or frameworks for long-term conditions.
- Improving musculoskeletal health through appropriate interventions, such as around physical activity.
- Equitable access to the best available treatment with comprehensive, coordinated care pathways including a workforce trained in musculoskeletal conditions and early intervention.
- Government and employers to provide meaningful support for people with musculoskeletal conditions to remain in or return to work. Work needs to be seen as a health outcome by health professionals.
- Empowering people living with musculoskeletal conditions to take control of their health.
- A disability benefits system that is fair, transparent and equitable.
- Improved data on all musculoskeletal conditions.
- Managing and improving musculoskeletal health through appropriate and targeted physical activity interventions.