



nras
National Rheumatoid
Arthritis Society

JIA 
at
NRAS
JUVENILE IDIOPATHIC ARTHRITIS

Annual review 2023





Clare Jacklin, CEO

Message from the CEO

2023 was a full and active year in the life of NRAS and despite thinking it was going to be a really tough year financially we once more had a good year due hugely to Gifts in Wills. It humbles me that so many people think so highly of the charity that they include us in bequests from their estates.

Some successes to highlight during the year include the launch of another SMILE-module on the topic of the importance of exercise in managing inflammatory arthritis. Promoting SMILE was the core of our messaging at the British Society for Rheumatology's conference in Manchester this year. Our focus going forward in 2024 will be to analyse the impact of the self-management modules on improving people's lives and effecting behaviour change.

During the year we published two key reports one in conjunction with Oxford Hospitals titled **Accessing Care during the Pandemic** and the second following a nationwide study on how people felt that 'stress' plays a part in their inflammatory arthritis. Both are available to order via our website nras.org.uk/resource/accessing-care-during-the-pandemic-report/ and nras.org.uk/product/stress-matters-report. The latter will lead to us producing a new guide in 2024 relating to managing stress with helpful tips and techniques provided by people with lived experience of inflammatory arthritis.

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I was honoured to be asked to join the ABPI (Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry) Patient Advisory Council in spring of 2023 (nras.org.uk/abpi-council) which I was delighted to do as the only MSK charity to be represented.

During 2023 NRAS joined with other patient organisations and professional societies to voice concerns via the House of Lords Enquiry which was instigated by the British Society for Rheumatology, regarding homecare medicine services across the UK. NRAS will continue to collaborate with interested stakeholders to develop positive actions to improve the experiences of those living with long term conditions, their health professionals, the industry partners and the homecare companies to build a resilient and sustainable homecare medicines service environment.

COVID concerns are still a regular topic on the NRAS helpline and within the rheumatology community so we continue to keep our support information up to date and promote the vaccine programmes across all four nations of the UK.

Finally at the end of the year I announced that I would be retiring in summer 2024. I was determined to give as much notice as possible to the board to ensure a well thought out recruitment campaign and I'm delighted to say that I shall be handing over the reins in July 2024 to Peter Foxtan who comes from the charity Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice.

As this will be my last Annual Review contribution I would like to say a very sincere thank you to all who I've had the great pleasure of working with during my 17 years at NRAS and wish the charity continued success for the future.



Message from the Chair of Trustees

Once again welcome to the NRAS annual review. 2023 was a very successful year for the charity, financially and in other ways. Thanks to the huge generosity of our donors we finished the year with a strong financial surplus, rather than the loss we had forecast. At a time when many people's personal finances are under pressure, charitable giving generally was down significantly in 2023. In anticipation of this, as in previous years, we had planned to draw on our reserves in order to continue delivering services at the same level, despite the expected reduction in our income. I am pleased to report though that, thanks to the largest ever income from legacies and a single very generous gift from a donor, we actually achieved a very positive result in the year which puts us in a strong position to continue delivering for people with RA and JIA.

These results and the work done by NRAS on behalf of those living with RA and JIA would not be possible without the continued efforts of our loyal and dedicated team of staff, supported by many dedicated volunteers and fundraisers. On behalf of the Board of Trustees I thank each and every one of you.

The charity was very active and successful during the year. Two new modules were launched on our e-learning programme, SMILE RA: How to Get the Best from your Consultation and Physical Activity and Exercise. Both modules provide practical support and advice in RA self-management. At a time when the NHS is struggling with backlogs and staff shortages, organisations like ours can make a real difference by helping people understand how to manage their disease better and live as well as they can. We also undertook a number of surveys during the year, working in partnership with other organisations and we carried out the first NRAS census to better understand those who use our services in order to respond more effectively.

Working with and helping the NHS to support those diagnosed with RA is the key theme of our Right Start programme, which aims to contact people especially as close to diagnosis as possible but at any time during their disease journey, and offer them information and help at a time when they need it most. In this way we can provide ongoing support between NHS Rheumatology appointments.

A highlight of the year was being chosen for the BBC Radio 4 appeal which helped both to raise funds and to raise our profile, as Kirsty Young recorded our appeal and shared her story of diagnosis and living with RA. Her story can be found on the NRAS YouTube channel. The NRAS YouTube channel is an absolute mine of useful information to anyone living with RA or interested in finding out more about what we do and how to access help.



Simon Collins, Chair

£15,000



Kirsty Young, known for presenting the BBC Radio 4's Desert Island Discs programme and for being the principal anchor in the coverage of the state funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, supported the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS) flagship fundraising and awareness raising campaign in 2023.

As someone who was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in 2018, Kirsty was invited to be the voice of the BBC Radio 4 charity appeal and she was thrilled to offer her support.

During the appeal, Kirsty shared the story of Dee, a person living with RA, and Dee's painful day-to-day journey with the disease. Kirsty was moved by Dee's story of how she had to give up work and what it meant to her to find such vital support and information offered by NRAS following a call to our helpline.

The appeal was broadcasted live twice on Sunday 10th September and once on Thursday 14th September. The aim was spread awareness of the disease and to donate if they were able to, as it's only through the support of the community that NRAS can continue to be there for all those who need them now and in the future.

From the campaign we raised just over £15,000 from around 250 generous supporters. Overall we were really pleased with how the campaign was received.

Right Start steadily increasing

Referrals from Health Care Professionals for the year almost reached 600 with over 50% of patients engaging in the service.

576

Right Start referrals

65%

Completed referrals



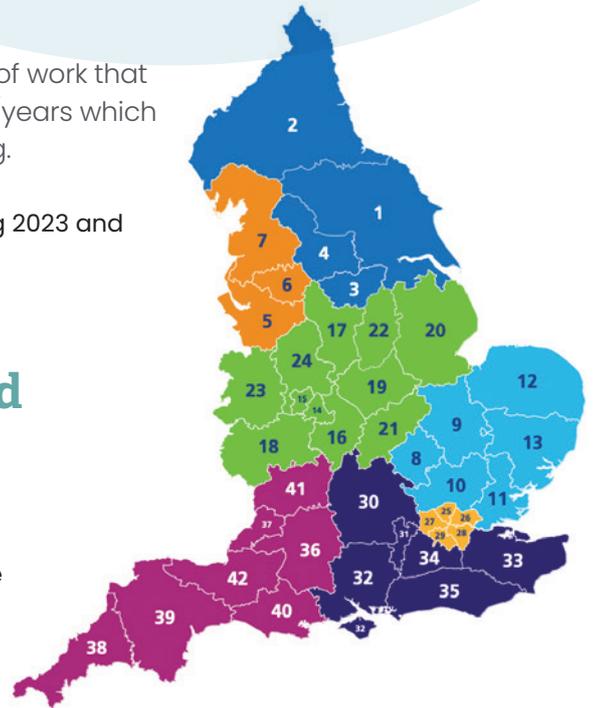
Advocacy & Campaigning work during 2023

With our targetted focus on RA and JIA there is a great deal of work that goes on behind the scenes, so to speak, over many months/years which contributes to nationwide policy work and awareness raising.

Here are just some of the projects NRAS has contributed to during 2023 and will continue to provide input until satisfactorily concluded.

Postcode lottery discrepancies in sequential prescribing of advanced therapies.

NRAS, working with leading clinicians and the British Society for Rheumatology (BSR), have been highlighting to various stakeholders that there is inequality across the UK on how people with inflammatory arthritis are able to progress through all the suitable and NICE approved treatments. CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups) and now ICBs (Integrated Care Boards) in some areas are restricting the number of treatments to 3, 4 or 5 per patient, which is contradictory to NICE guidelines and guidance. As a collective, we are demanding clarity from NICE to avoid the misinterpretation of the NICE directives ensuring that no patient will go without appropriate treatment on the grounds of, falsely, saving money!



Forgotten Lives

NRAS has supported this campaign representing approximately 500,000 people, which includes a substantial minority of people living with RA, who due to their conditions and treatments are still highly vulnerable to serious illness if they contract COVID. This coalition of patient organisations is calling for prophylactic treatment to be made available on the NHS for this group of people with long term conditions e.g. rare blood cancer, sarcoidosis etc. During the campaign 'Forgotten Lives' has generated the highest number of parliamentary questions compared to any other health campaign in recent years. To find out more about Forgotten Lives UK, please visit: forgottenlives.uk

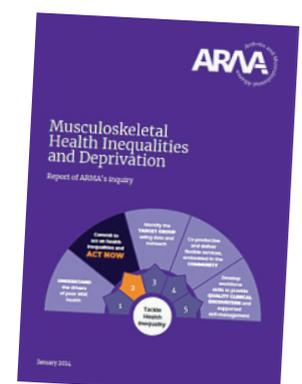


Prescriptions Charges Coalition

NRAS is a member of a group of 50 organisations calling on the Government to scrap prescription charges for people with long-term conditions in England, but until then, to at least freeze the prescription charges. With a General Election due in 2024 this will be one of NRAS' and many other patient organisations' key asks of prospective candidates standing for election.

ARMA (Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance) - Inequalities Report

NRAS was proud to contribute to ARMA's Inquiry on Musculoskeletal Health Inequalities and Deprivation during 2023. The Act Now report will be published in 2024 and launched in Westminster. ARMA's ambition is to reduce these health inequalities and ensure everyone can access the highest quality health and care, regardless of their background or where they live.



Inquiry into Homecare Medicines Services



During 2023, NRAS joined with the British Society for Rheumatology and other patient organisations to raise our concerns on behalf of patients and clinicians regarding the level of service being provided to patients by the Homecare Medicines companies. This resulted in a House of Lord’s inquiry. Significant work is needed to assure patients and clinicians of the future safety and reliability of homecare medicines services following the government’s response to the Lord’s inquiry Homecare Medicines Services.

A group of charities including ourselves, CCAA – Kids With Arthritis, Juvenile Arthritis Research, SNAC (Scottish Network for Arthritis in Children), Lupus UK and Versus Arthritis alongside the British Society for Rheumatology (BSR), have been working together to champion improvements in mental health support for children and young people with arthritis. A recent outcome of this ongoing workstream was the publishing of the survey findings: ‘The current mental health status of children and young people with JIA, and their wider family’: a charity partner collaboration survey. (pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37798784)

Key findings from the survey:

59%



Prevalence of Mental Health Support Needs:

Approximately 59% of children and young people with JIA had received, were receiving, or were waiting for mental health support. However, many reported never being offered mental health support during their JIA-related medical appointments.

82%



Impact on Parents: The majority of parents (82%) indicated that their child’s diagnosis had adversely affected their own mental health.

Research supported during 2023

Thousands of people from the NRAS community have been involved with NRAS research, whether initiated by NRAS or facilitated on behalf of the UK rheumatology community, in 2023. Whether it was contributing to a focus group or completing a survey, all involvement is very much appreciated and research data supports the development and delivery of our services and campaigns.

We had approximately 5,000 responses to surveys in 2023. Two particular survey highlights of the year have been collaborations with the British Society of Rheumatology Biologics Register for Rheumatoid Arthritis (BSRBR-RA), on understanding the long-term effects of treatments for RA, including their safety, and with Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Rheumatology Forum on the topic of Menopause and Rheumatology. In addition to our partnership collaborations, we also support a large number of third-party surveys which we promote throughout the year. Also included in 2023 were surveys on behalf of academia in Canada and Australia seeking UK patient experiences for international studies on JIA Pain & Wellbeing and Medicines Adherence. All shared outcomes and reports can be found on our website.



Mission RA

In 2023 we supported the MISSION-RA study in its third year of a 5-year fellowship, whereby we hosted four focus group sessions in one day all contributing to the development of a mobile phone app which can help people with RA be more physically active. This work also included in-person qualitative interviews conducted by our National Patient Champion, Ailsa Bosworth and one of our very active research volunteers, Teresa Shakespeare-Smith, following training by Oxford University in Qualitative Interview techniques. The Principal Investigator of MISSION-RA, Prof. Sally Fenton from the University of Birmingham said "I was fascinated to witness the difference in follow-on questions asked by Ailsa and Teresa because they both live with RA. Usually researchers undertaking qualitative interview work do not have the depth of knowledge about living with the condition." We have large pool of Patient Views Representative volunteers (circa 100) who have confirmed their interest in and commitment to research, which we can approach to regularly support focus groups, surveys, research questions, etc.



Research – Digital Rheumatology Scotland

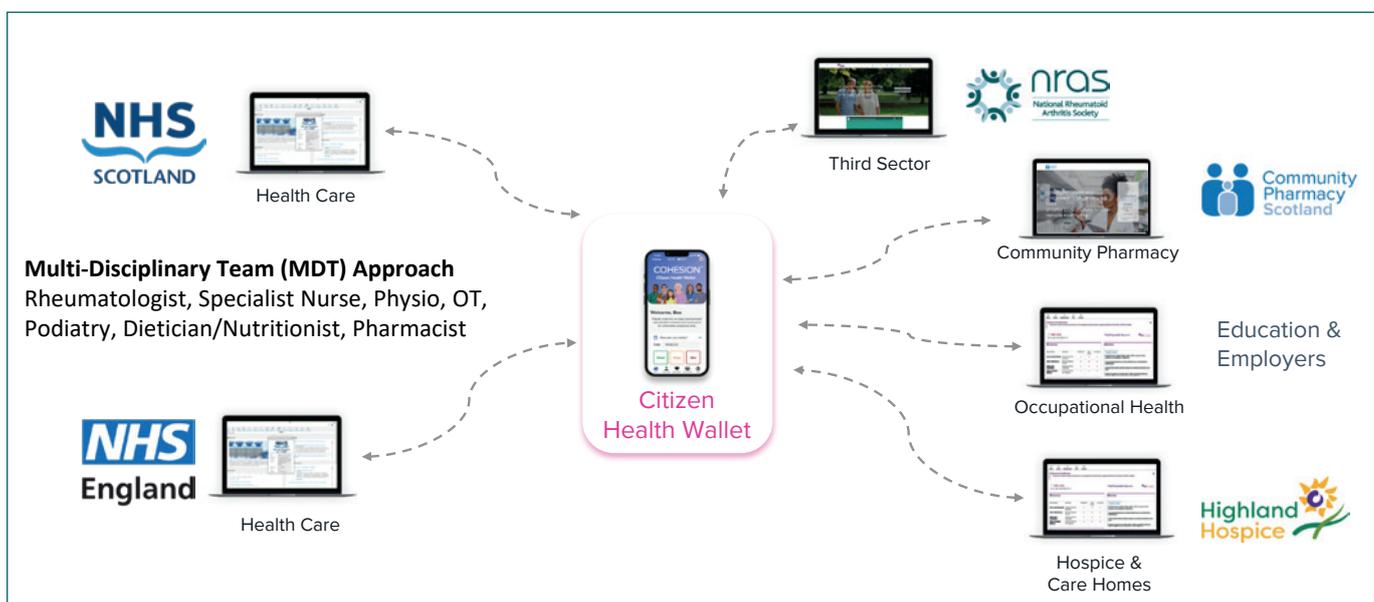


NRAS has been one of the leading partners and the RA patient voice in a 5-year project, managed by Health Improvement Scotland, to improve citizen-led health experiences in Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA). The focus of the work started in 2018 and the aim was to improve the outpatient consultation by RA patients completing paper-based (PROMs) 'patient reported outcome measure questionnaires' prior to seeing their consultant and filling in additional information such as 'what currently matters to me'. 100 patients were recruited from Lanarkshire and Greater Glasgow & Clyde hospitals and the research successfully demonstrated that both patients and health professionals (HCPs) liked and benefitted from this process, and a report was published in 2020.

After further collaboration, in 2022, the above Alliance were successful in bidding for a further tranche of funding from The Health Foundation to look at 'How to build trust and confidence between patients and clinicians' in the use of remote monitoring, as the paper-based system had evolved from paper to web-portal to the Citizen Wallet – an application developed by Cohesion.

NRAS and Cohesion held a number of focus groups with patients only, health professionals only, and then a mixed group of patients and health professionals. The broad consensus from the patients was entirely positive about using such technology to self-manage and monitor their disease, with only minor concern about privacy. HCPs were equally enthusiastic about the need for this technology but a little concerned about how they would triage incoming data.

High Level overview of Project Connections



Citizen Health Wallet User Testing



3 NHS Sites
(9 clinical services),
5 Community Based



74 real world testers (39
iPhone, 35 Android)



32 NRAS volunteers
(2 dropouts as phones
10+ years old)



2,235 estimated sessions
from NRAS volunteers
(74.5 average)



615 health monitoring
events recorded



20 health messages to
testers from multiple
services



200+ WhatsApp
messages with NRAS
volunteers

Celebrating our proudest moments, here are some of the comments from the NRAS testers:



Really comprehensive tool to help me manage my long-term conditions.

What a great project. This will speed up my care and the speed of my treatment. Priceless!

Will help with my anxiety when symptoms occur.

A really good communication tool for patients to communicate with health clinicians

The App is brilliant. It's great having an electronic DAS as well.

Helps me to record and monitor my symptoms, medication and feelings.

Love it! Exciiiiited! Woop woop :)

What a terrific idea this is - incredibly useful app with great potential to help patients and professionals

It's fab good

There's loads I like about it.

As a consequence of our collaboration funded by The Health Foundation, NRAS and Cohesion are taking the Citizen Wallet to the next level, connected directly to NRAS to support patients in their self-management over a longer period of testing in 2024/25.



qrco.de/bfDcXU

RA Awareness Week 2023

RA Awareness Week (RAAW) is typically one of the busiest weeks in the calendar for us at NRAS. Once again, this was the case in 2023 and our #RADrain campaign garnered lots of positive buzz within the RA community. The idea behind the campaign was to emphasise how simple day-to-day tasks can really drain people living with rheumatoid arthritis and sometimes leave them unable to continue with their day - in many cases, before it has really begun.

DRAIN

To achieve this we created a headline video piece, following the morning of someone struggling to get ready and progressively 'draining their battery'. To complement this, we also created a little downloadable guide for '10 Ways to Maximise your RA battery'. This guide was downloaded 648 times and got some lovely feedback from the community. The main video piece currently sits at 1,658 views on YouTube, making it one of our most viewed videos of 2023.



In the month of September, when the majority of the RAAW content went out - we saw increases across all our main social media content. Additionally, we put out a supplementary video where Maddy shared her RA story after being diagnosed with the condition in 2018. This got over 27,000 views across all our social media channels and is still one of our most engaged posts we have ever done.

303,186



20,335



6.7%



553



Impressions

(increase of 133% on previous month)

Engagements

(increase of 242% on previous month)

Engagement Rate

(increase of 47% on previous month)

Net Follower Growth

(increase of 168% on previous month)

To everyone who contributed, engaged, watched or shared our content - a massive thank you for making RA Awareness Week 2023 a big success!

JIA Awareness Week 2023

JIA (Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis) Awareness Week 2023 was an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the challenges faced by children and young individuals living with this chronic autoimmune condition. The week-long initiative aimed to increase understanding of JIA amongst the wider community, foster empathy, and promote support for those affected by JIA. Myths such as “children can’t get arthritis”, “you always grow out of it”, “you were fine yesterday, so you can’t feel that bad today”, can be upsetting to hear as well as frustrating to constantly correct. So, for JIA Awareness week 2023, we aimed to become ‘Myth-busting superheroes’ and to put those misconceptions to bed, instead highlighting what it is really like to have Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis.



Throughout Awareness Week, JIA Superheroes from around the UK, tweeted, re-tweeted, posted, and shared their own photos and videos to illustrate their experiences of JIA misunderstandings with our hashtag #BustingJIAMyths. For example, Megan Bennett, 17, from Bristol, posted a new video every day on her Instagram account, explaining how the condition can fluctuate, meaning good days and bad days... and some really bad days; how it is wrong to think that symptoms are only felt in the winter when actually they can affect you all year round; that joint pain is the only symptom when in fact there are many others including swollen joints, stiffness and restricted movement, fatigue and loss of appetite.

109,373



Impressions during campaign period
(69k in 2022)

5,484



Engagements
(4343 in 2022)

7,591



Video views
(2355 in 2022)

174



Audience
grew by 174 people

534



Mythbuster
quiz responses

Fitness coach Isaac from Versus Limits Coaching, wanted to bust the myth that children cannot have arthritis- he was diagnosed at 11 and explained how exercise helped him to feel that he had taken back control of his body and improved both his mental and physical health. Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP for the Glasgow area, a huge supporter of NRAS and other organisations like us that support young people living with arthritis, shared how her mother was told it was just ‘growing pains’ before she was finally diagnosed with JIA.



In summary, JIA Awareness Week 2023 served as a crucial platform for education and advocacy, highlighting the often-overlooked challenges faced by children, young people and adults affected by Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis. Awareness week underscored our commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of those dealing with chronic health conditions within the JIA community and beyond.

Stress Matters Project



If I had a pound for every time I'd heard people with Rheumatoid Arthritis tell me a story of how their disease started and how it was related to a stressful event in their lives that they associate the onset of symptoms to, I'd be a wealthy lady. While it has been well documented the link between childbirth and onset of symptoms, there is not a great deal researched into how other life events may trigger inflammatory arthritis (IA). Likewise, so many people living with IA link experiencing flares to going through a stressful time.

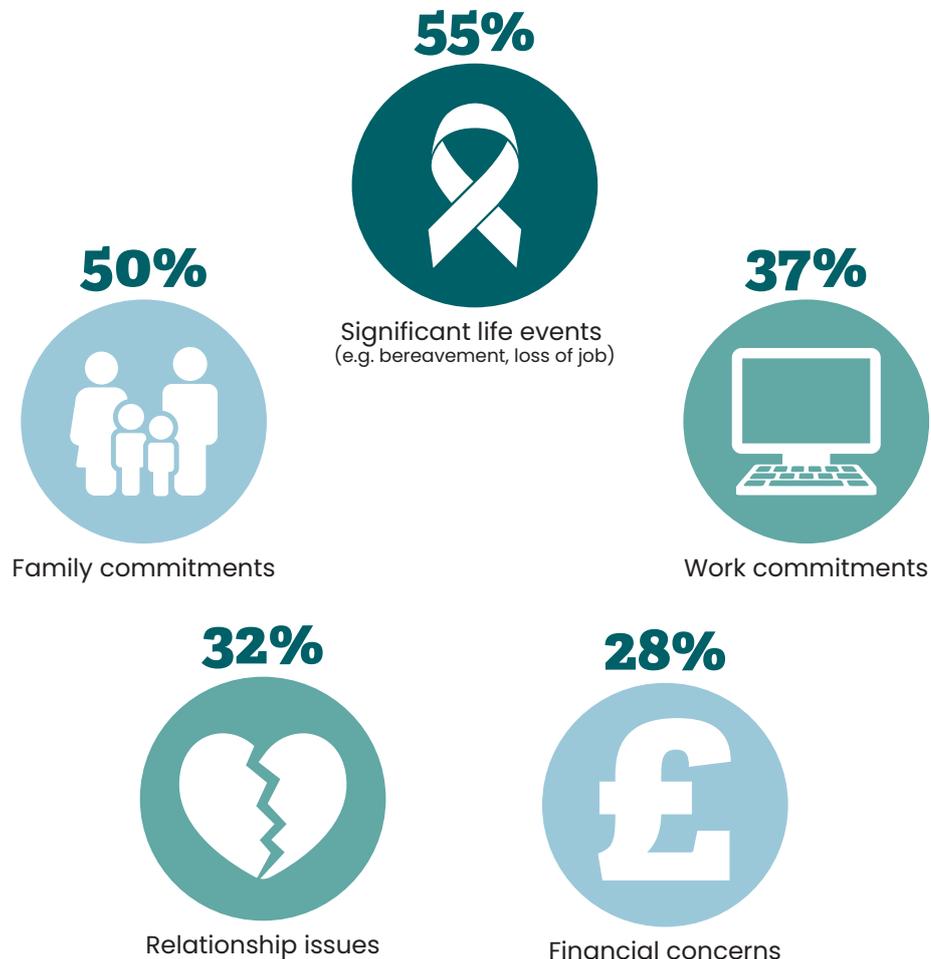
When living with a long-term condition that can cause worry and anxiety about what the future may hold etc. it's not surprising that such stress can manifest itself in physical exacerbations.

NRAS felt that it was time to look more closely at this topic and thanks to Inmedix for providing a hands-off educational grant, we conducted a nationwide survey of people with IA to learn more about the impact of stress on their lives and what techniques people use to manage stress.

In September 2023 we published the survey report which we hope will be the catalyst for more research and more discussion on the topic of stress management because Stress really does Matter.

We worked with Emma Caton, Research Assistant, King's College London. The full report can be downloaded at: nras.org.uk/stress-matters

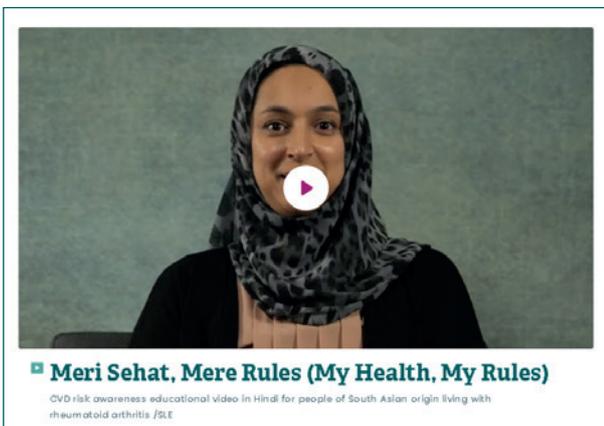
Top 5 stressors associated with triggering flares



Resources for UK South Asian Populations

Two meetings of the Global Majority Advisory Board were held in the year and our work on behalf of the South Asian communities across the UK affected by Rheumatoid Arthritis and/or JIA continued apace. We launched an important new video **Meri Sehat, Mere Rules (My Health, My Rules)**. This video addresses the critically important subject of managing one's cardiovascular risk.

People with RA are at considerably higher risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and many people die earlier as a result of this. In this video, two of our wonderful volunteers, Joti and Ayesha, discuss this topic and how they can modify some South Asian recipes and meals to be as healthy as possible.



In April 2023, we collaborated with the Sikh temple in Birmingham at the Vaisakhi 'Mela'. The University of Birmingham (UoB) team acted as NRAS ambassadors at this event together with a several Global Majority Board members including Birmingham GP, Dr Afshan Salim.



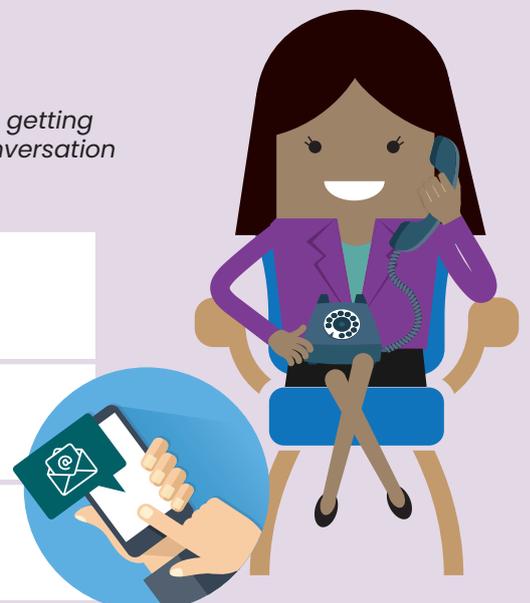
At a second event it was very reassuring to meet so many healthcare professionals working within the South Asian communities from the Birmingham area that are willing to work with NRAS.

We continued to support Dr. Kumar and colleagues at UoB in partnering on a number of grant applications for research into issues impacting people with RA from South Asian communities.

NRAS Helpline

"Lovely, gentle, calm voice on the end of the phone. Really helped with getting my head organised with what I thought was going to be a difficult conversation with my GP." - Helpline User

2477	No of Helpline calls and enquiries (via phone, email)
1901	No of Helpline calls
576	No of incoming Helpline emails



SMILE Successes

SMILE-RA, the NRAS e-learning programme continues to be well received by people with RA and health professionals alike. Registrations at the end of 2023 were approaching 4,000. During the course of the year NRAS launched a 7th module, The Importance of Physical Activity and Exercise, together with five additional, short, 15 minute 'taster' videos delivered by experts on different types of exercise which included:



Tai Chi



Yoga



Tripudio
Movement
Systems

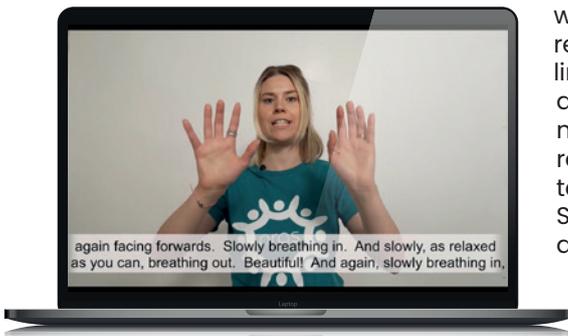


Movement to
music



Strengthening
and Resistance
Exercises

All exercises were demonstrated both seated and standing to enable people with differing levels of mobility and function to use these as needed or as a daily workout to improve their strength, fitness and balance. People with inflammatory arthritis have multiple barriers to undertaking regular physical activity (PA) or exercise, including physical limitations, reduced mobility, fatigue, also lack of confidence and not knowing what to do, fear of embarrassment, injury or making symptoms worse, a lack of professional input, advice and resources, inaccessible facilities and financial costs. In the longer term we hope to be able to translate the above short videos into South Asian languages as we know this is such an important topic and is extremely challenging for many living with RA.



The NHS workforce is under more pressure through workforce shortages, long backlogs of patients and under-funding than ever before, and signposting their patients to SMILE (and other NRAS resources) enables them to feel confident their patients are accessing high quality, evidence-based educational and supported self-management resources.



Gillian's story

Gillian tells us why it was important to her to put a gift in her Will to help future generations living with RA.. As a consequence, NRAS will be able to support more people diagnosed and living with RA.

Gillian was introduced to NRAS through her rheumatology team, and has since become a member, takes part in research projects, attends talks and has read all of our publications.

"I was 62 years old when the juggernaut of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) came my way – bringing with it severe pain and fatigue, not to mention confusion and anxiety.

In the years following my diagnosis, I felt strongly supported by NRAS, a charity that I believe speaks for ME, along with all other people living with RA and JIA in the UK. Because of this, I wished to support NRAS in a lasting way. I decided to leave a gift to NRAS in my Will. "

In 2023 NRAS received over £1 million in charitable gifts in Wills. This allowed the charity to manage 2,495 helpline enquiries, send out 35,336 publications and reach 632,850 people.

Where has our money come from?

Thanks to our fantastic community, generous gifts from legacies and corporate partnerships and funders, we increased our income to **£1.87m** in 2023 (13% increase on £1.65m in 2022).

£561.5k
Donations and Gifts



£34.7k
Investment Income



£20.5k
Other Trading Activities

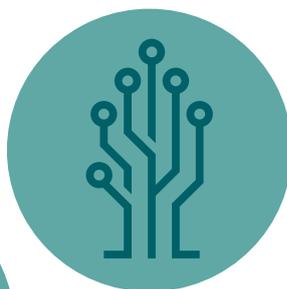


£210.9k
Charitable and fundraising activities



£1.04m
Legacies

£80.3k
Digital Innovations



£299.4k
Raising Awareness



£415.5k
Information & Support



£244.9k
Community Support



£141.8k
Supporting Younger People



Where was it spent?



Working with the Pharmaceutical Industry

The aim of NRAS is to work to achieve a better life for people living with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) and JIA Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis. NRAS recognises that working with pharmaceutical companies which manufacture drugs to treat these diseases can help us to achieve this aim.

We therefore would like to thank the following companies for supporting the work for NRAS in 2023 and acknowledge financial payment of any consultancy provided by NRAS for the work undertaken by industry partners.

AbbVie Ltd	Biogen Idec Limited
Eli Lilly and Company Limited	Fresenius Kabi Limited
Galapagos Biotech Limited	Inmedix Inc
Medac Pharma LLP	Pfizer Limited
Sandoz Limited	UCB Pharma Ltd

Total funding received from the pharmaceutical industry in 2023: **£102,844.83**

For more information, please visit nras.org.uk/funding-disclosures-2023

New2JIA Right Start



2023 was the first full year of our new service, New2JIA Right Start, launched in November 2022 to support the families and carers of children and young people newly diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis. The aim of the service is to ensure that anyone receiving a new diagnosis of JIA, can access support and guidance from the outset helping them to feel more confident in managing their child's condition as well as connect with other families in the same situation.

Over the course of 2023, 64 families were referred to the service by healthcare professionals from 15 UK hospitals. Those referred were invited to attend a scheduled group call with other newly diagnosed families involving a presentation on key topics such as 'What is JIA?', 'Who are your child's healthcare team?', 'Tips for managing flares' and 'Treatment and medication pathways used in JIA.' The participants also had the chance to ask questions and share experiences with other families on the call.

We learned from the service Impact Measurement Survey that 100% of the families who attended a New2JIA Right Start call would recommend the service, had learned more about the condition, and felt more confident in managing their child's JIA.

During 2024, we will expand our service further to reach more families. The newly extended service, to be called 'JIA Connect,' will allow for self-referral as well as the current referral by a healthcare professional. Those referred will have access to pre-recorded topic videos to watch in their own time, a closed group forum to engage with other families and the option to register for 1-1 peer support, group calls and other JIA-at-NRAS webinars and events. Through the service we hope to create a safe and active community for anyone affected by a JIA diagnosis.



Be referred by a Healthcare Professional



Attend online group call



Understand all about JIA



Follow up call and access to our resources



Feel supported all the way

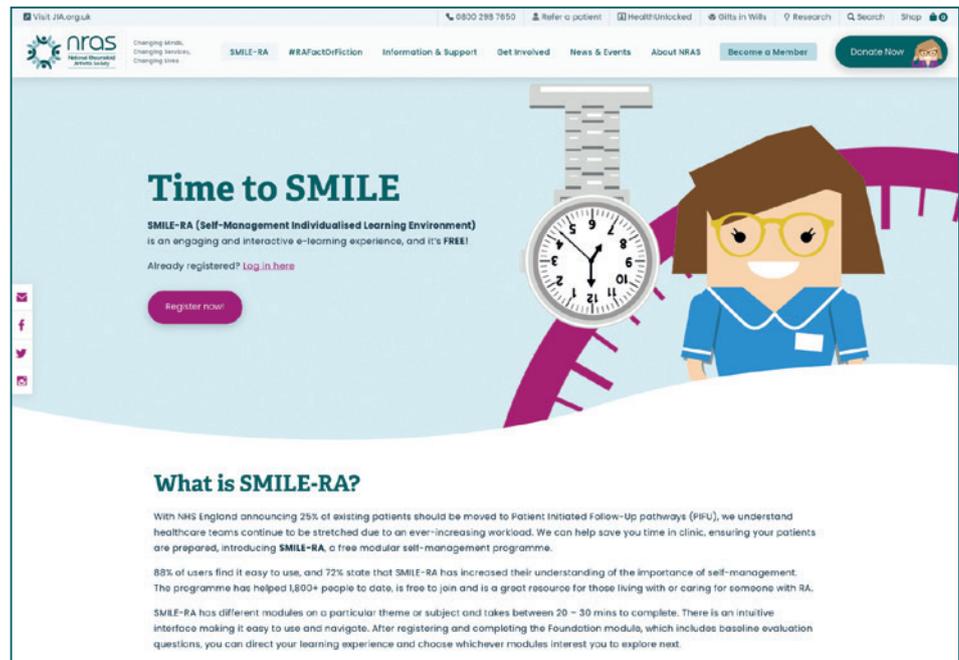
Quote from participant:

"The Zoom chat was great and informative. It was lovely to meet the team and other families and to share our experiences and also to go over information that we may have missed from our own talks with our rheumatology teams. The presentation was excellent, and I really appreciated the follow up email with the attached links for us to use. It was lovely to speak with other parents and to be able to relate and I think this will help parents like myself to open up more about our worries and to find new ways of helping to make treatments easier for our children by sharing simple tips."

Hello, my name is Cate.

I have had RA since I was 31, nearly 30 years.

I have completed all of the learning modules on the SMILE-RA programme. I first signed into SMILE-RA during the COVID pandemic, when I was going through a particularly difficult time with my RA and at a time where face to face appointments were not easily available.



Visit nra3.org.uk

0800 298 7650 Refer a patient Health Unlocked Gifts in Wills Research Search Shop

nras National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society

SMILE-RA #RAFactOrFiction Information & Support Get Involved News & Events About NRA3 Become a Member Donate Now

Time to SMILE

SMILE-RA (Self-Management Individualised Learning Environment) is an engaging and interactive e-learning experience, and it's FREE!

Already registered? [Log in here](#)

Register now!

What is SMILE-RA?

With NHS England announcing 25% of existing patients should be moved to Patient Initiated Follow-Up pathways (PIU), we understand healthcare teams continue to be stretched due to an ever-increasing workload. We can help save you time in clinic, ensuring your patients are prepared, introducing **SMILE-RA**, a free modular self-management programme.

88% of users find it easy to use, and 72% state that SMILE-RA has increased their understanding of the importance of self-management. The programme has helped 1,800+ people to date, is free to join and is a great resource for those living with or caring for someone with RA.

SMILE-RA has different modules on a particular theme or subject and takes between 20 - 30 mins to complete. There is an intuitive interface making it easy to use and navigate. After registering and completing the Foundation module, which includes baseline evaluation questions, you can direct your learning experience and choose whichever modules interest you to explore next.

I found the modules extremely beneficial. I particularly liked being able to dip into a section of my choice when was convenient for me and I felt more empowered to be able to manage my disease from home. Although I had RA for many years, going through the module on **Managing Pain and Flares** provided really useful reminders about how I could return to or try new strategies to alleviate discomfort. Over the timescale of my RA, I have also been on many treatments, progressing through a range of DMARDs and biologics. The module on **Medicines** followed by **How to Get the Best from your consultation** came out at a time when I was having to cope with many side effects from medication leading to eventually needing to be switched to a different treatment. Having completed these modules ensured I was able to prepare questions to discuss with my consultant which ultimately gave me the confidence to talk about what was important to me. We were able to come to a joint, shared decision resulting in me starting a new treatment. I felt listened too and more capable of taking control of my disease.

I can thoroughly recommend SMILE-RA to anyone with RA. The structure of the modules makes them very accessible, enables you to complete them at your own pace and return to them at a later date. They are visually engaging, interactive and easy to follow.

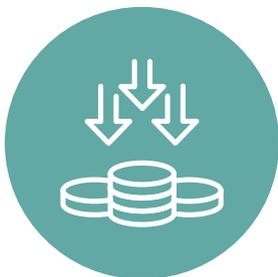
To find register to SMILE-RA visit nras.org.uk/SMILE

NRAS' Environmental Changes

At NRAS, we are committed to taking steps to protect the planet and environment for today and future generations. In 2023, we took significant strides to have less of an impact on the world in which we live. Some of the initiatives we implemented include:

Review of Our Publications:

We conducted an in-depth analysis with our printing company to understand how we could reduce the paper weight of our publications. By doing so, we achieved several positive outcomes:



Cost Savings

This move had a massive direct impact on saving NRAS thousands of pounds.



Environmental Impact

By reducing paper weight, we saved trees, contributing to a more sustainable environment.



Transportation Cost Reduction

Lighter publications meant lower postal and transportation costs.

Whether it's shredding and recycling our paper waste, implementing recycling programs for our coffee machines, or maintaining our continued hybrid working policy, NRAS remains dedicated to helping and protecting our environment.

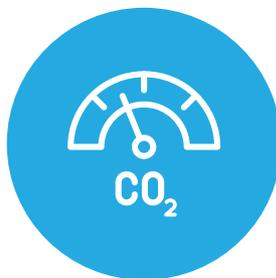
The New Office Environment:

At the end of 2022, we transitioned to smaller, more energy-efficient offices. This decision has had several benefits:



Energy Savings

Our energy bills decreased significantly due to the smaller offices.



Carbon Footprint Reduction

We also made a commitment to hybrid working, allowing employees to work from home 2 days a week, and closing our physical office on Fridays. These measures directly impact NRAS' carbon footprint.



Thank you from NRAS

We are very grateful for the support we have received in 2023 and on behalf of the thousands of people NRAS has helped and supported during the year, we'd like to say Thank You.

Without you, we would quite simply not be able to provide vital information and support to those living with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) across the UK, as well as their families, carers and the healthcare professionals who treat them.

Our CEO, Clare Jacklin, would like to give special thanks to every individual, group, company and organisation that supported NRAS through 2023.

Specific acknowledgment is due to the following organisations for sizeable donations and grants given to NRAS during 2023:

We would also like to thank all the NRAS Groups throughout the UK who continued to support our work with donations.

Thank you to all our dedicated fundraisers and supporters in the community who continued to raise vital funds.

To all those individuals, friends and family members, who lost a loved one in 2023 and chose to honour their memory with a donation to the charity, a sincere and much appreciated thank you for thinking of others during a difficult time.

Carr-Ellison Family Charitable Trust	The Knoll Charitable Trust
Doris Field Charitable Trust	The Michael Cornish Charitable Trust
Millenium Stadium Charitable Trust	The National Lottery Community Fund
Sir Jeremiah Colman Gift Trust	The Paul Gore Trust
The Ardwick Trust	The Pharsalia Charitable Trust
The Chapman Charitable Trust	The SMB Charitable Trust
The Charles Littlewood Hill Trust	The Vandervell Foundation
The Childwick Trust	The William and Mabel Morris Charitable Trust
The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust	
The February Foundation	Richard and Joanna Kennedy
The Grace Trust	Premier Care in Bathing
The Ian Askew Charitable Trust	Simplyhealth
The John Coates Charitable Trust	Unity Lottery



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NRAS is committed to minimising the impact of its activities on the environment. All paper used in this publication is FSC (Forest Stewardship Certified) and sourced from sustainable woodlands.

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