



back  **up**

transforming lives after spinal cord injury

Impact report 2021/22

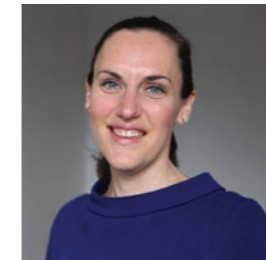


Components of success

- Being peer driven
- Growing fundraising to meet our ambition
- Developing and empowering our people
- Being inclusive
- Harnessing technology
- Driving efficiency and effectiveness
- Volunteers at our heart
- Compelling communications
- Committed to collaboration
- Open and accountable



Welcome



At Back Up, one of our values is to embrace challenge. Over the past year, we have definitely lived this value! Many of our in-person services – from our vital wheelchair skills training sessions to our life changing face-to-face courses – were put on hold due to the continued impact of the pandemic. Not having a physical presence in the NHS spinal centres for large portions of the year, meant we found it harder to reach newly injured people. However, with the support of our brilliant Back Up community, and a little innovation, we continued to provide vital support to people. From launching our new online Employment Toolkit, to the expansion of our virtual courses, we’ve pioneered new ways to reach everyone affected by spinal cord injury.

This year marked the first in our journey to achieving the ambitions laid out in our Transforming Lives Strategy. Our strategy defines our focus till 2025, and ensures all our work is centred around three goals: living confidently, thriving at any age, and staying connected.

The progress we have made is only possible due to the support shown by our donors; individuals, fundraisers, trusts and corporate partners. To each and every one of you, thank you for enabling us to continue our life-changing work.

The achievements in this report are also testament to our passionate volunteers, who continue to go above and beyond to support Back Up and individuals affected by spinal cord injury. Thank you to everyone who has generously given their time.

Together, the Back Up community has weathered a very unusual couple of years, and laid the groundwork for an ambitious and exciting future. The stories in this report show that Back Up remains such a vital lifeline to so many.

Abigail Lock | CEO

The impact of Back Up's work in 2021/22

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic continued to affect our services throughout 2021/22. So, we developed our digital services further to reach as many people as possible. And, as the year progressed, many of our face-to-face services resumed.

900



Our online support group, the Back Up Lounge, was attended over **900 times**



130

130 family members accessed our family support services, with **98%** of family members feeling more supported after joining our family support events.

35



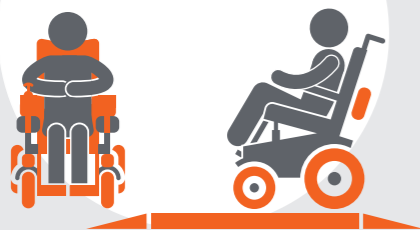
35 children and young people were supported through our Education Inclusion service, with **100%** of those young people feeling happier at school.



254

254 people attended our Wheelchair Skills Training sessions, with **100%** of participants learning more skills and feeling more confident using a wheelchair.

13,758



Our range of in-person and online services have been accessed **13,758 times** in 2021/22.

184



184 people were supported through our mentoring service, with **85%** reporting an increase in at least five out of seven positive coping strategies.



34

34 people attended our virtual What Next? and Skills for Work courses, with **87% of people** accomplishing their vocational goal within six months of attending the Skills for Work course.

4,047



Our new and improved virtual Education Inclusion Toolkit has been visited **4,047 times**.



Alex

Thriving at any age

When Alex was born, his spinal cord was tethered around the C5-7 level. Alex turned nine in August 2022. He's interested in everything, always wanting to learn more about the world around him, and he has great friends.

As a family, we were moving forwards and learning how to live positively with Alex's disability. However, during COVID, not attending school, seeing friends, or participating in wheelchair racing, gave Alex time to think and he started to struggle. He started focusing on the things he couldn't do, rather than the things he could. He felt very low and got frustrated. His self-esteem was at rock bottom and everyday felt challenging for him.

I tried to use my knowledge of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to help Alex. However, I don't have a disability so Alex felt I couldn't fully understand his experiences. He'd say- 'you just don't get it'.

Alex needed to speak to someone who could truly understand what he was going through, and who could give him insights into the promising future I know he'll have. I met one of the Back Up team at a 'Wacky Wednesday' session in Stoke Mandeville. I sat with him and asked a few questions about his life, his job, and even his wife. Hearing him speak helped me see the positive future Alex would have.

After reading about Back Up's mentoring service, we agreed Alex might find mentoring helpful. Alex's mentor was everything Alex aspires to be. They discussed everything - from cars and football, to the realities of living with a spinal cord injury. Alex even opened up to his mentor about how unkind comments from others made him feel. His mentor gave him valuable tips, and also showed Alex how to use breathing techniques when he is feeling frustrated. We both still use them most nights.

Mentoring has been a life-changing experience for Alex. His mentor was open and honest, and so positive about the future that it helped Alex picture all that his life could be. He really gave Alex hope at a time when he didn't have any. Alex is so much more open now about how he is feeling with friends and family. He's able to talk to us and seek advice rather than bottling things up and getting frustrated.

I was desperate to help my son and find the right support for him. Back Up was there for me, and him. I'll be forever grateful to Alex's mentor and to Back Up.

Lynne

Thriving at any age

After Syringomyelia caused my spinal cord injury, I started finding things quite difficult. I had a spinal shunt inserted in mid-December 2019, hoping it would improve my condition. But, unfortunately, it didn't work for me, and the day before my 70th birthday I had to have another operation. I'd planned a big party, but instead spent my birthday in the Marks and Spencer's café!

At that point, the COVID pandemic had just started to affect everyone in the UK, which was really tough. Resource was so limited, so I started looking at the support available and discovered Back Up. What's bizarre is that I knew of Back Up as I used to work for one of their corporate partners. However, at that point, I didn't think of myself as having a spinal cord injury. There's a tendency to think that if you don't sustain your injury in an accident, then you can't gain access to the support out there as you don't have a spinal cord injury. Back Up showed me that simply isn't true.

I signed up to mentoring right away as I didn't know anyone else who used a wheelchair, let alone had a similar injury to me. My mentor also sustained his spinal cord injury through an illness. It was so helpful speaking to him as he really understood what I was going through. To have that level of understanding with another person is so important.

After my experience with mentoring, I was keen to access the other support available, so I signed up to the What Next? course. At first, I was a little sceptical - I thought how can someone else teach me about confidence? But, from the first session, I changed my mind completely and found all the information so useful.

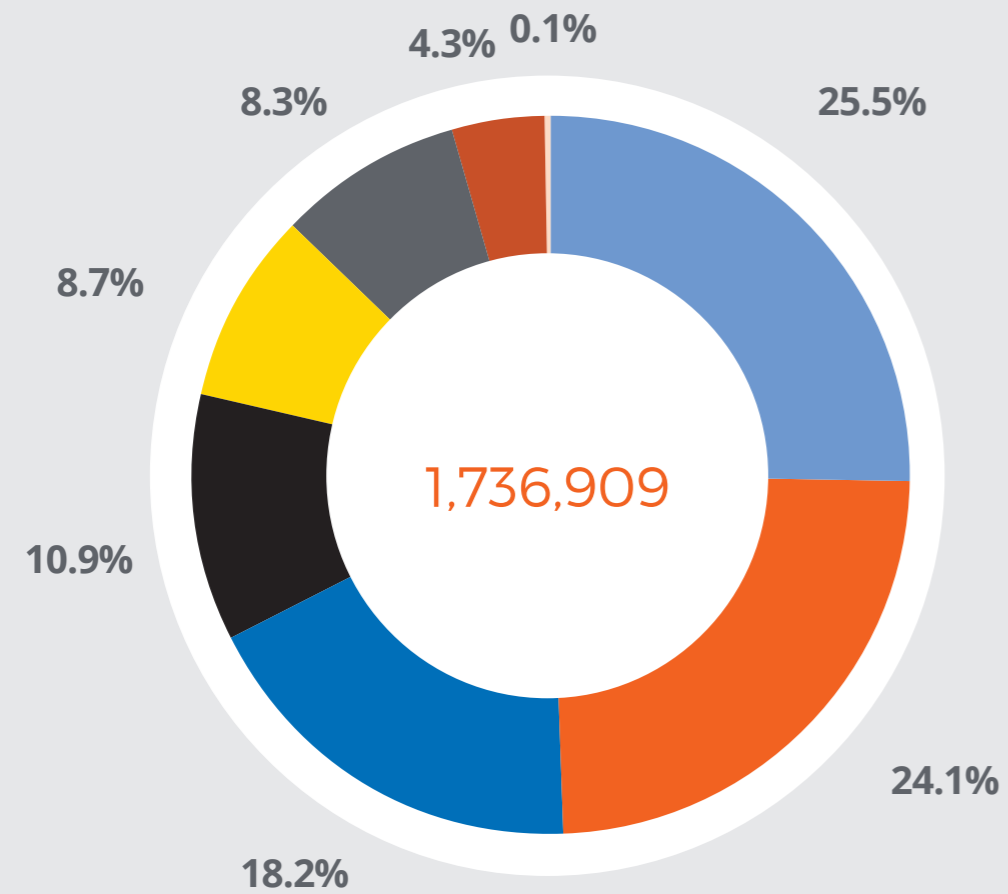
The course included sessions from lots of different people, some medical professionals but also those with lived experience. I found it so beneficial to hear about other people's experiences, as it made me realise there's different ways to overcome challenges. There was even a whole session on travelling, which taught me that visiting different countries was still possible. The physiotherapy session really stood out to me - the physiotherapist talked about pushing yourself a little, but often, rather than pushing yourself a lot, occasionally. This really stuck with me, and shaped the way I now approach exercise.

The whole experience was amazing, and just so encouraging. Meeting others in a similar situation and seeing how they approach life was so positive for me.

Now my confidence has increased, I'm starting to look into more activities and things I can do. I love sculptures, and this course has encouraged me to find live art classes that I can join. I want to make the effort now to really live, and enjoy life.

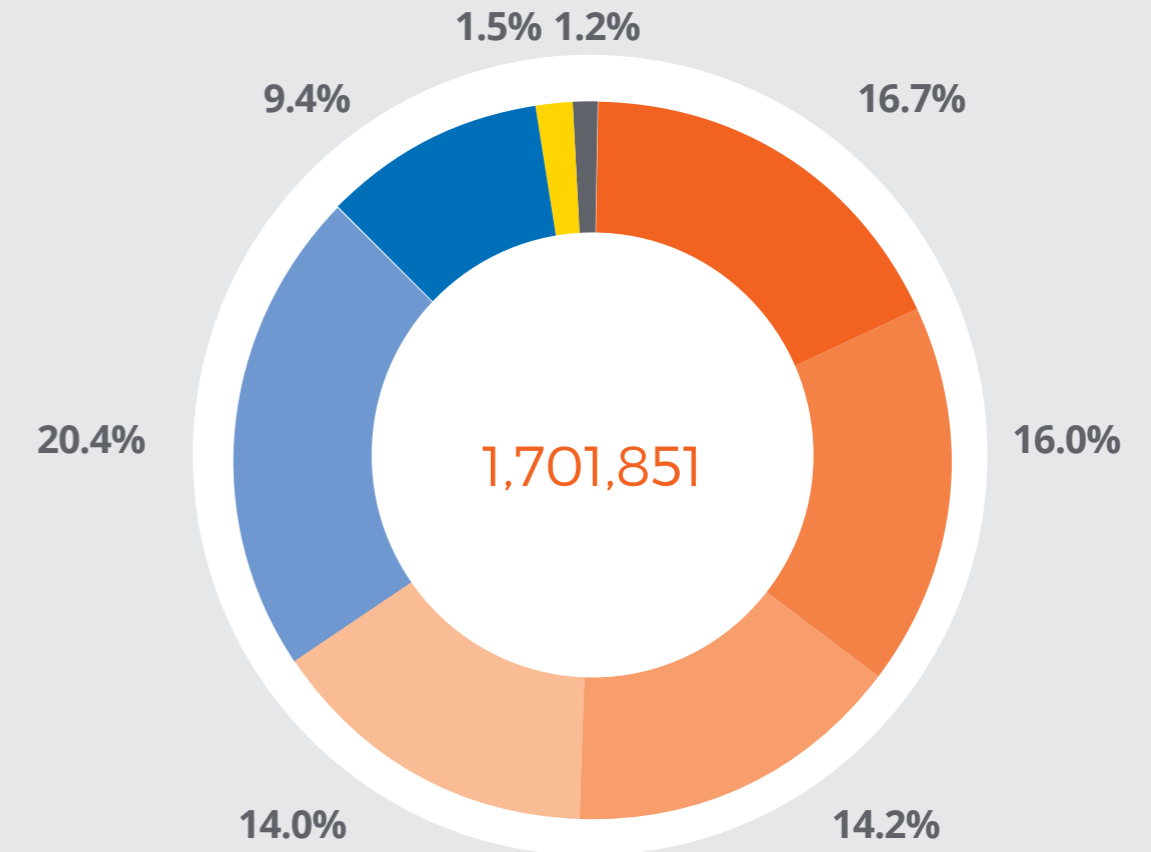


How we raised our money



- Events & Challenge
£442,461
- Trusts & Foundations
£418,226
- Donations
£316,022
- Government funding
£189,037
- Corporate
£151,664
- Trading activities
£143,535
- Community
£74,213
- Investment
£1,751

How we spent our money



- Mentoring
£284,502
- Outreach and Support
£271,649
- Events and Challenges
£240,909
- Courses
£238,444
- Fundraising
£347,362
- Awareness
£159,443
- Trading
£24,777
- Governance
£20,633

Although the majority of our income goes directly to our services, we wouldn't be able to function as a charity without spending on fundraising and governance to ensure the sustainability of our services for future generations. We recognise that going into 2022/23 there is still a high degree of economic uncertainty which is why we have maintained our reserves policy at four months. But, more importantly, our reserves will enable us to immediately invest more in our services in the coming year to deliver the commitments we have made within our ambitious Transforming Lives Strategy.

These reserves also ensure sufficient cashflow for day-to-day activities, meet opportunities that arise over time, and mitigate any unforeseen events that could come up over the next twelve months.

We already are delivering plans which will see us reaching even more people, providing more intensive support to those who have been injured during the pandemic and expanding our services to meet demand.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the individuals, organisations, corporate partners, trusts and foundations who have enabled us to support people with spinal cord injury in 2021/22. Without your generosity our work would simply not be possible.

Trustees

Helen Cooke*

Mona Dhanjal**

David Fraser*

Anne Luttman-Johnson*

Christopher Morgan*

Ben Parker**

Martine Petetin

Richard Rawstron
(Hon Treasurer from
July 2021 - present)

Tom Roberts**

Richard Smith
(Hon Treasurer – Resigned
10th November 2021)

Ben Sneesby*
(Resigned on 25th August 2021)

Rebecca Stevenson

Dr Clair Turnbull*
(Resigned on 10th
November 2021)

Joanna Wright*
(Chair of Trustees)

* Has a spinal cord injury
** family member

Patrons, Ambassadors and Individual Supporters

Brian Abram	Matt Newman
Jeremy Adam	Paul Newrick
Julie Allen	Sarah Oughton
Konrad Bartelski	Lauren Pethick
Vicki & Martyn Beckwith	Martin Port
Martin Bell	Jane Rogan
Barbara Broccoli	Nigel & Margot Russell
Alex Brooke-Turner	Marco Scognamiglio
Sophie Carrigill	Jo Sheasby
Juliette Clark	Raquel Sigaporina
Jeremy Cowdrey	Valerie Singleton
Padmasini Dayananda	Kara Smith
Ruth Earley	Mark Somerset
Jean Egbunike	Susie Turnbull
David Fraser	Anne Urban
Charlotte Grobien OBE	Patrick Woodall
Steve Ingham CBE	
Charlotte Johnson	
Karen & David Kremer	
Eric Lanlard	
Sue Loney	
Kate Marsh	
Jos Matthews	
Nick & Karen Millar	
Sophie Morgan	
Mike Nemesvary	

Trusts, foundations and corporate supporters

29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	Irwin Mitchell
Agnes Hunter Trust SCIO - Scotland	ITC Global Security Limited
Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Charitable Foundation	James Tudor Foundation
Ardwick Trust	Jessie Spencer Trust
Arnold Clark Community Fund	John's Investment Chronicle
Aspire Law	Leigh Day
Bank of Montreal	MASS
BBC Children in Need	Meikle Foundation
Beaverbrook Foundation	Michael and Anna Wix Charitable Trust
Big Yellow Storage	Mickel Fund
Boshier-Hinton Foundation	Miss I F Harvey Charitable Trust
Bruce Wake Charitable Trust	Miss W E Lawrence 1973 Charitable Settlement
C L Loyd Charitable Trust	Mitre Trust
Candis Club	National Lottery Community Fund
Charles and Edna Broadhurst Charitable Trust	Nottingham General Dispensary
Christopher Rowbotham Charitable Trust	Origin Care
CHS Studios	PageGroup
City Bridge Trust	Pennycress Trust
CliniMed Ltd	Pom Charitable Trust
Cognizant	R S Macdonald Charitable Trust
David Gibbons Foundation	RAPP
Douglas Arter Foundation	Redbrain
D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust	Russell Cooke
Eversholt Rail	Ryvoan Trust
Fittleworth	Savills
Forrester Family Trust	Shoosmiths
G J W Turner Trust	Sir John Osborn Charitable Trust
Ganzoni Charitable Trust	Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust
Garfield Weston Foundation	Stanley Grundy Foundation
Hayman's Gin	Stepping Stone Media
Helen Clifford Law	Stewart Investors
Henry Smith Charity	Stewarts Law
Hobson Charity Limited	VARRIER-JONES Foundation
Hodge Foundation	Wallace Bell Charitable Trust
Hollister	Walter Guinness Charitable Trust
HotChillee	Wellspect
Hugh Fraser Foundation	






back up

transforming lives after spinal cord injury

Back Up
4 Knightley Walk
London
SW18 1GZ

Tel: 020 8875 1805
Email: admin@backuptrust.org.uk

-  [backuptrust](https://www.facebook.com/backuptrust)
-  [@backuptrust](https://twitter.com/backuptrust)
-  [@backuptrust](https://www.instagram.com/backuptrust)

We'd like to thank our amazing photographer Ash Knotek for providing the majority of the photographic images used in this impact report.

