

Transform

For everyone affected by spinal cord injury

Autumn 2017



**“You never know
what’s possible
till you try.”**



NEW CURAN LADY
DESIGNED TO FIT IN PERFECTLY

Convenience and discretion matter to you – introducing new Curan Lady. Compact and discreet, this ready-to-use female intermittent catheter is easy to open, has a gel chamber that ensures a mess-free coating and offers a 16% saving compared to the market leader¹ – making it a cost effective alternative. With so many benefits, you will have the confidence to say yes to whatever life has to offer.



Careline: 0800 036 0100

CliniMed Ltd, a company registered in England number 01646927. Registered office: Cavell House, Knaresborough Way, Loudwater, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 9QY. Tel: 01628 850 100 Fax: 01628 527 312 Email: enquiries@clinimed.co.uk or visit www.clinimed.co.uk. Curan Lady is manufactured by Curan Medical BV, 7007 C3 Doetinchem, The Netherlands www.curan.eu and distributed in the UK by CliniMed Ltd. CliniMed® is a registered trademark of CliniMed (Holdings) Ltd. ©2013 CliniMed Ltd. 1686/0213/1.

1. Drug Tariff. March 2013



Contents

Latest News4

Big Lottery funds new position in Scotland5

Diana award win for amazing Maisie6

Do it yourself fundraising8

Mark – you never know what’s possible till you try10

The Snowdon Push12

Getting young people the support they need14

Bike for Back Up16

Back Up have courses for everyone18

Daschund through the snow20

Our Christmas Appeal20

Our research into ageing with a spinal cord injury21

Ulster University’s research project21

Back Up’s impact in 2016/1722

Who is Back Up for?

Back Up is for everyone affected by spinal cord injury and their family members, regardless of age, level of injury or background. Our services aim to build confidence and independence and include:

- Mentoring
- Wheelchair skills training
- Residential activity courses
- Support to make sure children are included at school
- Support with going back to work

We understand a spinal cord injury can be devastating, but we believe it shouldn’t prevent anyone from getting the most out of life.

To find out more call us on **020 8875 1805** or visit **backuptrust.org.uk**



The Back-Up Trust, 4 Knightley Walk London SW18 1GZ.
Reg Charity Numbers 1072216 and SC040577.
Company No 3596996 Registered in England and Wales



Welcome to our Autumn 2017 edition of Transform, my first ever as the new CEO of Back Up. From my very first meeting here, I was certain that it was a very special organisation – a charity that listens to the people it supports and makes sure they’re at the heart of everything they do. Back Up continues to go from strength to strength, and I’m so excited to lead this organisation in the years to come.

In 2016/17, we reached 881 newly injured people – the highest number in our history. We’ve expanded the range of courses we offer this year (page 18) with additional Next Steps and Skills for Independence courses added to meet the growing demand. And it’s thanks to our many great volunteers, fundraisers, supporters and annual events like the Snowdon Push (page 12) that achievements like these are possible – we’re so grateful for their fantastic support.

To update you on the office move, we’ve now settled in at 4 Knightley Walk, London, SW18 1GZ. I do hope to meet more of you at our new home, or at the upcoming Back Up Ball, November 18.

Best Wishes,
Sarah Bryan
Chief Executive, Back Up
sarah@backuptrust.org.uk
or **020 8875 1805**.

Latest News



Sarah Bryan joins Back Up as our new CEO

Sarah Bryan joined Back Up in July as our new CEO. She has a wealth of experience in the charity sector, having worked at both Leonard Cheshire Disability and Combat Stress. Her career started in advertising and communications agencies, where she launched the NSPCC Full Stop campaign.

"I was inspired to work for Back Up after hearing about the charity's transformative impact on people's lives, the amazing contribution made by the volunteers, and the user-led approach to its award-winning services."



Back Up Ball 2017: The final countdown!

Here at the office we're all getting excited for this year's Back Up Ball and discussing costume ideas for the Heroes and Villains theme.

The ball is an amazing accessible party and one of the highlights of the Back Up calendar. It's always a great chance to catch up with friends made on Back Up courses over the years, and to celebrate and raise funds for Back Up's essential work.

There's still a chance to get tickets to this year's ball which will be held on November 18, 2017, at the Birmingham Hilton Metropole Hotel. Get your tickets today by visiting our website or calling the events team on 020 8875 6722.

Back Up has a new website and logo

Earlier this year, we launched a brand new website which brought together the content from the previous fundraising and services websites and streamlined them into one. We made the decision to upgrade our website so people who need support, or want to fundraise or volunteer for us, can access the information they need quickly and efficiently. Do make sure to give our new website a visit and check out our updated logo too at www.backuptrust.org.uk.



Expanding our employment support

At Back Up, we're here to support people to get the most out of life. And for most people, work is an important part of our lives and our daily routine. That's why we've introduced the part-time role of Back Up to Work Manager to lead and develop our employment services.

Andy Adamson, who's taking on the role, says: "A big part of getting newly injured people back into work is encouraging everyone around them to have early conversations about employment, so that they feel that work is possible. There will also be tailored follow-up support for people who attend our Back Up to Work courses which will include return-to-work plans, signposting to other organisations and possible work experience placements."



Big Lottery funds new position in Scotland

We're planning to double the number of people in Scotland who receive Back Up's support, thanks to a new grant from the Big Lottery Fund.

Back Up has been working across Scotland for many years – reaching people with a spinal cord injury through our mentoring, outreach and courses, and by partnering with the NHS and other charities. But we knew we needed to do more as we're currently only reaching 40% of newly injured people each year in Scotland. Now with the support of a fantastic four-year Big Lottery Fund grant, as well as ongoing support from the R.S. Macdonald Charitable Trust among others, we'll be able to reach more people across Scotland.

The £149,859 grant will enable us to completely change our work in Scotland – linking more Scots into our UK-wide services. It will enable us to recruit our first ever Outreach and Support Coordinator in Scotland. They will focus on:

- Increasing the wheelchair skills training sessions we can offer
- Expanding our patient education sessions
- Making calls to all Scots who register with Back Up
- Referring people to our services and other charities' services



For more information about our work in Scotland, contact Andy Masters on 020 8875 1805 or email andym@backuptrust.org.uk

- Recruiting more local volunteers
- Setting up a second course in Scotland

There are particular challenges for people with a spinal cord injury in Scotland – many more people live in exceptionally rural areas, or don't have the opportunity to access specialist rehabilitation. We surveyed people who we already support in Scotland and this led us to better appreciate the distances and isolation people faced. We plan to gradually introduce more outreach at hospitals in Aberdeen and Inverness, as well as piloting wheelchair skills training outside of Glasgow.

We will continue to work closely with the Queen Elizabeth National Spinal Injuries Centre in Glasgow and with other Scottish charities. We expect the new post to strengthen these relationships to ensure seamless, holistic support for people affected by spinal cord injury in Scotland.

Andy Masters, Back Up's Outreach and Support Manager says: "We're so pleased to have received this funding for our vital work in Scotland. We look forward to working with our fellow charities and NHS Scotland, both regionally and at the Queen Elizabeth National Spinal Injuries Centre in Glasgow, to deliver our mentoring, courses, wheelchair skills, support for families and other services for those most in need."



Diana Award win for amazing Maisie

We are delighted to announce that one of our young volunteers, Maisie, has received a Diana Award which celebrates young people who make an outstanding contribution to society.

Since becoming involved with Back Up in 2015, Maisie has shown herself to be a hugely passionate advocate for our services as a young wheelchair skills trainer, group leader and youth advisor. Speaking about her award, Maisie says:

"I was over the moon to be nominated for the Diana Award, so learning that I had won it left me speechless! It already feels like an award in itself to be volunteering for Back Up. They have done a lot for me and I'm so grateful. It is an honour to have received the award for volunteering for Back Up."

Maisie first met Back Up when she was undergoing her rehabilitation at Sheffield Children's hospital. She attended a wheelchair skills training session, gaining vital skills that she would later pass on to other young people.

"Before meeting Back Up I was very conscious about people staring at me, but Back Up got me out and about," says 17-year-old Maisie.

Maisie stayed in touch with Back Up once she returned home, and became a member of our youth advisory group which helps to shape and inform the under 18s services that we offer. Maisie quickly became an incredibly dedicated youth advisor, and was instrumental in developing a series of vlogs to showcase practical tips and skills for young people with a spinal cord injury. She also became a volunteer wheelchair skills trainer, using her experience to grow the confidence and skills of other young people.

"It is brilliant that Maisie has received a Diana Award, and thoroughly well-deserved. Maisie is a thoughtful and committed volunteer with a fantastic ability to support other young people by working alongside them, engaging them in our services and demonstrating such a positive, can-do attitude to the opportunities she takes on. Well done Maisie!" says Ella Provan, Back Up's U18s Services Manager.

ADVERTISEMENT

CYCLONE
Inspire, Empower, Achieve.

obi

Join the dining
revolution



**"Finally, I can skip my
vegetables!"**

Isaac, 14-year-old with a C4 SCI

**Cyclone brings you Obi - the first ever dining robot of
its kind!**

The simple, effective, and elegant design gives you flexibility on
where, when and what pace you eat.

To find out more you can visit our website: www.cyclonemobility.com

Call us on **0800 180 4850** or email us at info@cyclonemobility.com



/cyclonemobilityuk



@cyclonemobility



@cyclonemobility



Cyclone Mobility

Do-it-yourself fundraising

Back Up receives no government funding so every pound raised makes a huge difference. From bake offs to beer festivals, there are so many ways that people raise awareness and funds for Back Up – here are three amazing examples:

Katie's Back Up Bake Off

In 2014, Katie's father was paralysed after an accident at work. Katie, 17, met Back Up whilst he was in hospital and she received support from the mentoring team. "I wanted to support Back Up because they helped me understand what had happened to my dad and what this meant for us as a family."

A keen baker, Katie and her friend organised a cake sale at school. Katie says: "I was surprised by how interested the students were – I expected them to be just after the cake but lots of people wanted to know more about spinal injury and Back Up!"

Katie and her dad are members of their local clay pigeon shooting club. The club were delighted to host a second cake sale to support the charity. The events raised a fantastic £258 – this could give other young people the chance to talk to a mentor.

Gemma's 10k challenge

Gemma's life changed completely when a rare condition left her with a spinal cord injury.

A mum of two, Gemma received Back Up's help to improve her wheelchair skills. We also matched Gemma with a mentor who has been on the phone during her toughest times.

To turn her negative situation into a positive, Gemma wanted to fundraise. "I was never a runner before. But while I was taking the kids out, I'd wheel a few miles without noticing! So I thought, why can't I race in the same way too? Amazingly, I managed the Worthing 10k in my chair in an hour."

Gemma handed out business cards asking for £2 printed with a text donation number, to everyone she knew. "Loads came in after the event – so always ask again after your challenge," she says.

Gemma has since attended the Back Up Multi-Activity course. The £865 she raised could help someone else benefit from our services. She says: "Nothing seems beyond me now!"

Richard's exhibition

Richard broke his neck in a car crash on holiday and was paralysed from the chest down. With the support of his family, Richard rebuilt his life and returned to his career as a photographer and director.

Richard says: "Meeting active, independent people with spinal cord injury was a lifeline. Back Up opened my mind to the possibilities of being up a mountain or how to get up a kerb. They focused me on what I could do, rather than what I couldn't do."

Last year, a decade since his accident, Richard put on an exhibition of his personal photography and donated the proceeds to Back Up. He received help from many colleagues to organise the event which raised an incredible £26,946.

Richard says: "I'm never going to wheel a marathon. So, I thought what do I do that can best help the charity? Whatever your talent or interests, there's a way to support Back Up. I never knew how much I'd get back from giving."

If you're inspired to organise your own event, or take part in one of ours, we're on hand with advice, ideas and fundraising materials. No matter how big or small, your generosity will change lives. Contact Kat, on 020 875 1805 or email her at katherine@backuptrust.org.uk

Mark – you never know what's possible till you try

For Mark, Back Up has been a gateway to a supportive network of people who understand life with a spinal cord injury.

Mark, aged 25, has big plans on the horizon. He's considering starting his own business in construction, and has just got engaged to his long-term girlfriend with plans to tie the knot in 2019.

Mark's certainly come a long way since we first met him in 2016 on the Belfast City Skills course, not far from his home in Newry.

Mark says: "I got a call about a last-minute spot on the course. Even though I didn't have much time to prepare, I signed up because I really wasn't feeling confident using my wheelchair to get around where I live."

The course was a great experience for Mark, and he took away a lot from the week.

"I really liked meeting other people from all over, and there was great mix of ages and injury levels too. The wheelchair skills sessions were also really useful, and helped

build up my confidence."

Mark hadn't spent time with other people with a spinal cord injury since his rehabilitation, and enjoyed the opportunity to be around people in a similar situation again.

"Before that course, I was used to being the only person in a wheelchair in a group. For the first time, I didn't feel like I stuck out because I was surrounded by lots of people using wheelchairs. It was great not feeling isolated, and being with a group of people who just get it. More importantly, it was great craic too."

Learning from others

Mark quickly caught the Back Up bug and, two weeks later, he was on our Moving Forwards course for 18-25 year olds in Leeds – a course specifically designed by young adults for young adults.

"I really enjoyed doing the cooking on our come dine with me night – a first for me! And

the treasure hunt was a laugh too. I always feel like I have a great time on Back Up courses, the worst part is having to go home at the end!

"And there's so many tips you take away with you from people. That's one of the great things about Back Up – meeting and chatting to different people and getting to share those things that you found helpful. I feel like I've learned so much stuff about life with spinal cord injury that way."

Friends, fun and the future

One of Mark's favourite things about Back Up is the social network it brings, giving him the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life. He caught up with many of his Back Up friends at last year's ball – our annual get together for everyone involved with the charity.

"I thought it would be dinner, and not much else. But afterwards, the dance floor was full of wheelchair users and it was great fun. If there had been another ball the following weekend, I would have gone. I've already bought my ticket for the next one in November."

Mark has made friends, had fun, and grown in confidence since he first met us. It's been noticed by friends and family too. His fiancée Laura says:

"Back Up has given him a network where he can speak with other people in a similar situation and discuss problems that he might have, which he may feel unable to speak to me about. This gives me reassurance that he does have other people around to help. I would recommend Back Up to anyone with a spinal cord injury, it has given Mark so much independence!"

Mark believes Back Up has a lot to offer other young people like himself.

"I'd say to anyone just give it a go. If you're sitting at home, you'll never know what's possible till you try it. You've nothing to lose, but you could gain a lot."



Mark and his fiancée, Laura

Would you like to attend one of Back Up's life skills or activity courses? Please get in touch with our Courses Coordinator, Merryn, on 020 8875 1805 or email her at merryn@backuptrust.org.uk



The Snowdon Push

The Snowdon Push is Back Up's most iconic fundraising challenge involving teams of up to 16 people taking on Mount Snowdon, which stands at over 3,500 feet high. One member of the team must be a wheelchair user, and together they push, pull and climb towards the summit and back again. The event is open to people of all injury levels and abilities.

2017 was a great year for all involved in the Snowdon Push, and we raised over £90,000. We spoke to Daniel, who took part with the NatWest Marketeers this year about how he found the challenge.

Daniel, 32, says: "I was apprehensive at first about signing up. I was worried about being the one in the wheelchair and relying so much on people I didn't know. But after talking it through with the community team, I had a better idea of what to expect and felt more comfortable."

Daniel signed up to the challenge, and was happy to discover that he would be joining an experienced team. "They were all lovely and told me all about when they had taken on the Push before," he adds.

Daniel started to feel excited for the challenge to come and put in a lot of training to make sure he was prepared. When the day arrived, he felt fully included from the beginning.

"I never once felt like they were just getting me to the top of the mountain – we were all getting there as a team. That was one of my favourite things about it," says Daniel.

Halfway up the mountain, it dawned on Daniel just how far he had come in the 15 months since a spinal bleed during surgery left him permanently paralysed from the waist down.

"We all stopped for a minute for a break and I looked up. There was a lake just to the right of me and it was a perfect view. My arms were aching like crazy, but I remember just thinking I'm in a wheelchair and I'm climbing the biggest mountain in England and Wales. I'd never felt this strong or this powerful."

Daniel and his team were thrilled to win the fastest team award. But for Daniel, his proudest moment was realising that a life with a spinal cord injury could still be full of excitement and opportunities.

"I have such a huge sense of pride and achievement and will hold on to that experience forever."

Would you like to take part in next year's Snowdon Push on July 7, 2018? Please contact our Community Fundraising Manager, Kat, at Katherine@backuptrust.org, uk or call her on 020 8875 1805.

ADVERTISEMENT

Infyna

Ready to Use Hydrophilic Intermittent Catheter

New

Available to order

Change the experience with Infyna.

Because using a catheter shouldn't make people feel like patients.

Ready. Easy.



We listened to you and created Infyna and Infyna Plus catheters to help meet the needs of your patients. Easy-to-open and ready to use hydrophilic catheters with reduced spill and no stain, so patients can open with confidence.* Infyna Plus catheters provide an integrated collection bag for convenience. Both are designed with a balance of flexibility and rigidity to provide smooth, no-touch insertion. Infyna and Infyna Plus catheters can redefine what it feels like for your patients to use a catheter.



*Data on file.
The Hollister logo, Infyna, and Infyna Plus are trademarks of Hollister Incorporated.
©2017 Hollister Incorporated.



Please visit hollister.co.uk or call customer services on 0800 521 377 to request a sample



Getting young people the support they need

At Back Up, we believe that all children and young people with a spinal cord injury should be able to receive specialist care from a spinal centre during their rehabilitation. All 11 spinal injury centres across the UK work closely with general and children's hospitals, and St Francis' ward at the National Spinal Injuries Centre, Stoke Mandeville, offers specialist support for children and young people. Despite this, we know that not all young people get to access the specialist care they need to make a confident start to life post injury.

Some children and young people will undergo their rehabilitation at a general or children's hospital. Many healthcare professionals at these hospitals do an exceptional job, but they may have little to no experience of working with people who have a spinal cord injury. That's where Back Up and other organisations can help, providing support, knowledge and wider connections.

“The openness and honesty was appreciated by everyone.”

Through working with Trauma and Rehabilitation Coordinators Kay Newport and Karen Hodgkinson at Birmingham Children's

Hospital, we have supported several children and young people to return to school and get an independent care team in place. We've also run several family fun days at the hospital, and have another one planned this November. We deliver wheelchair skills training at these sessions, and our young volunteers share their experiences of living with a spinal cord injury.

The feedback from Kay and Karen has been glowing. They say: “The openness and honesty was appreciated by everyone. They were full of enthusiasm and we were amazed by the way they encouraged even the more reluctant children into taking part.”

We have equally strong relationships with the Sheffield Children's Hospital. We met one of our great youth volunteers, Maisie (page six), through Hannah Keable, who works as a Trauma and Rehabilitation Coordinator at Sheffield Children's Hospital. Hannah told Maisie's family about a wheelchair skills

session run by Back Up that was taking place

at the Princess Royal Spinal Injuries Centre across town. Maisie and her family went along and she took part in the session. It was

a great opportunity to improve her skills, learning tips and techniques from people who also have a spinal cord injury.

“When you're adjusting to life with a spinal cord injury, it's important to meet other spinal cord injured people who have been there and who can show you what's possible.”

Hannah says: “Back Up's support has also been invaluable for getting children and young people with a spinal cord injury back into school and participating in activities.”

Our Under 18s Services Manager, Ella, adds: “When you're adjusting to life with a spinal cord injury, it's important to meet other spinal cord injured people who have been there and who can show you what's possible. We've met several young people outside of spinal centres who have found the chance to talk, ask questions and just be around other people with an injury, hugely beneficial.”

With more resources in place, we now have a part-time Outreach and Support Coordinator who will focus on making these vital connections. We've already visited

Manchester Children's Hospital in May this year to speak to staff about what we do. A physiotherapist who attended the talk, Clare Convery, said: “Staff were impressed by the volunteers' honesty during their informative talk and their willingness to answer queries on all aspects of spinal cord injury, sharing their own personal stories and offering excellent advice. We will be signposting children and their families to this valuable resource.”

We're also continuing our involvement in a collaborative project to establish a young person's NHS care pathway. This pathway would set out the standard care protocols for all children and young people who sustain a spinal cord injury.

Ella explains: “Although there are many children's hospitals and spinal centres working extremely hard to ensure children have access to the most appropriate care, there are still many children and families who are unaware that such care exists, or are unable to access it. We're currently working with the NHS and other organisations to better understand what children and families want from the care they receive, and how we can put a national pathway in place which ensures they can access that specialist care when they need it.”



Bike for Back Up

Would you like to bike for Back Up? Have a look at two fantastic challenges you could take on in 2018 to raise funds for people affected by spinal cord injury.

Ride London 100

Vivienne and her friend Jane took on the iconic 100-mile cycle ride this year for Back Up. For Vivienne, it was a deeply personal challenge as her son Oliver had been supported by us after he sustained a spinal cord injury.

"Through Back Up, Oliver discovered that life with a spinal cord injury can be a full and active one," says Vivienne.

In the lead up to the event, Vivienne worried that they hadn't done enough training to complete the event. But when the day came, it went off without a hitch.

She adds: "It really was an amazing experience. We managed to complete the 100 miles and it was an exhilarating experience to cycle down The Mall – feeling very proud that we had achieved this huge physical feat, and that we had raised over £4,000 for Back Up."



Land's End to John o' Groats

Claire first became aware of Back Up's work through her close friendship with our U18s Services Manager, Ella. Hearing about all the ways Back Up supports people affected by spinal cord injury inspired Claire to take on an extra special fundraising challenge – a bike ride from Land's End to John O'Groats.

Claire says: "We wanted a challenge and completing the cycle in aid of Back Up pushed us to train extra hard."

The challenge took 12 rainy days to complete, but the route was stunning and they pushed on to the very finish.

"We felt a huge sense of achievement. I also felt a little sad that it was all over. I loved our training leading up to it and realised that it had actually been a really enjoyable experience."

If you'd like to find out more about our 2018 cycling and handcycling challenges, please email Kat at katherine@backuptrust.org.uk or call her on 020 8875 1805

navina[™]
SMART

ADVERTISEMENT



When the bowel works, life works

"Navina Smart gave me control over my bowel, changing my life completely. It allowed me to be me again."

Kerry, Navina Smart User

Living with chronic constipation or incontinence can make it difficult to establish a regular bowel routine. One highly effective and safe solution is Transanal Irrigation (TAI) which involves emptying the bowel using water. The award winning Navina Smart has an electronic pump and touch sensitive controls putting you in control of your bowel.

For more information on Navina Smart, please call 0800 124 4228 or email Navina.uk@wellspect.com. To hear more about the work we are currently doing with Back Up, please visit our blog at www.wellspect.co.uk.



wellspect
HEALTHCARE

Wellspect HealthCare, Building 3, The Heights, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0NY

Back Up have courses for everyone

Back Up's services continue to evolve and this year is no different! Our diverse range of courses is expanding so an even wider group of people can participate. In 2018, we're running three extra courses in response to demand.

New Under 13s course

When your loved one has a spinal cord injury, everyone is affected – so supporting families is vital. Each year, we run residential activity courses for young people with a spinal cord injury. This summer, our extra course for under 13s had spaces for more siblings. It was a chance to be part of the adventure with their sister or brother and see what they could both achieve.

“Both the girls loved it. Becky was really independent on the course and Megan could do everything that Becky could do. They could just be sisters again.”

Liz's daughters, Megan and Becky went on the course together. Becky has a spinal cord injury. Liz says: “Both the girls loved it. Becky was really independent on the course and Megan could do everything that Becky could do. They could just be sisters again.”

Becky learned new wheelchair skills and met volunteers with a spinal cord injury. Liz says: “The people from Back Up were fabulous. It made Becky realise she could have a normal life. When Becky got on the horse I cried, and she said it was the best day ever. We said goodbye to what Becky couldn't do and hello to what she can do now!”



Skills for Independence

This course aims to give you the practical skills and confidence you need to lead a more independent and active life. We're doubling the number of spaces next year with a new course in Scotland.

Before the course, we discuss in advance what you'd like to achieve and then tailor the sessions to your specific goals. You then receive intensive support from our trained volunteers throughout the course who will work with you to achieve your aims.

Rob, 42, had missed out on specialist spinal rehabilitation and despite returning to work as a script writer and living fairly independently, Rob's lack of wheelchair skills was limiting his life.

Rob says: “The course started with the basics, like how to push properly or move one-handed carrying a drink. We then moved onto tackling kerbs and ramps, or transferring to and from the chair. At the end, they showed me how to get down a flight of stairs!”

Rob left full of enthusiasm. He says: “Encountering new obstacles was no longer a problem now I had the confidence to overcome them. It's incredibly freeing - now I'll happily rock up with my 'toolbox' of skills anywhere.”

Meeting other people with a spinal cord injury was eye-opening. He says: “I realised that you can sort of do everything you did before your injury. Just differently.”

Rob is now a volunteer skills trainer. Having struggled so long himself, he's passionate about helping other people.

Next Steps

Last year we delivered our first ever Next Steps course, specifically aimed at people who can walk some or all the time. By offering two courses this year we're enabling more people to benefit.

It's all about what you want to learn to lead a more enjoyable and healthy life. We cover anything from fatigue and pain management to cooking and getting around a city. One of the group leaders and all the trainers have a spinal cord injury and are able to walk to some degree.

Mariam attended Next Steps last year and says the course exceeded her expectations. She had struggled in hospital, feeling overlooked by staff, and then isolated at home. She says: “I didn't use my wheelchair for a long time. I could manage a few steps – but I couldn't walk very far and experienced fatigue and spasms.”



Mariam found it very positive to share her experiences and meet new people. She says: “I was so happy to have found people who felt like me, and to hear what they had to say. Before that, I thought the pain and guilt were all in my head.”

“Holly, Scott and everyone helped me to understand I didn't need to be ashamed about my disability, I can be who or what I want to be. For the first time, I felt comfortable being outside in a wheelchair, it just felt perfectly normal.”

Mariam is now hoping to take on a fundraising challenge for Back Up.

For details of these and all our course dates, call our courses team on 020 8875 1805 or email courses@backuptrust.org.uk



Daschund through the snow

This year, we are offering Back Up Christmas cards in 3 fantastic designs to raise funds and awareness of our vital services for everyone affected by spinal cord injury. We only have a limited number of these cards available, so make sure you order now to avoid disappointment.

All cards come in packs of 10 with envelopes for £3.99. The message inside all cards reads "With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year".

To buy your cards online, please visit www.charitycardsonline.com/back-up-trust

If you are not sending cards this year, you could donate instead - £20 could pay for our outreach team to make three phone calls to support people through their darkest hours.



Our Christmas Appeal

Our Christmas campaign this year focuses on how we supported Samuel, 11, after an accident during a school rugby match left him with minimal feeling and movement in his legs. Samuel was only 9 years old at the time and the injury turned his life upside down.

Since then, we've supported Samuel to settle back at school with a visit from Lucy, one of our volunteer school advocates. Samuel says, "Lucy told the students to ask before helping me, which is great because I would rather be independent." Samuel also recently went on one of our multi-activity courses, trying out abseiling and archery, while making new friends with other young people with a spinal cord injury.

Samuel's mum Ali said of the course: "A massive thank you from the whole family.

Samuel loved it and the girls and I really got loads out of it. Thanks for the opportunity and for all you do for our family and families like us. You are amazing!"

During the 12 days of Christmas, 36 people and their families will have their lives changed forever by a spinal cord injury.

By donating today, you can help us support more people like Sam to get back to living life to the full.

<https://www.backuptrust.org.uk/get-involved/xmas>

Our research into ageing with a spinal cord injury

Back Up has recently been carrying out research into how a person's needs change as they age with a spinal cord injury. We surveyed a range of people who've been living with a spinal cord injury for over 20 years to find out what their experiences had been, and what challenges they had encountered.

Loss of independence was a recurring theme. Some worried that they may not be able to use a manual wheelchair into their old age, or that they might have to make adaptations to their house. Many remained positive however because they had consciously planned for the fact that their lifestyle would have to change as they aged. They recognised that accepting assistance maintained their independence, rather than took away from it.

As we're always led by the needs of the people we support, we're now forming an ageing with spinal cord injury working group to investigate these findings. This will inform the development of Back Up's strategy on this wide-ranging issue.

We also shared the initial findings of our research earlier this year in our monthly e-newsletter – it was our most read issue ever. Many people got in touch afterwards to talk about how ageing had affected them, and how glad they were that Back Up was starting this discussion. One of the people we heard from was Dr. Mary Hannon-Fletcher, a senior lecturer from Ulster University who has a spinal cord injury. She explains her own research project below.

If you'd like to share your thoughts on ageing with spinal cord injury with us, please contact our Head of Services, Beth, at beth@backuptrust.org.uk or call her on 020 8875 1805.

Ulster University's research project

Words by Dr. Mary Hannon-Fletcher

As a person who has lived with a spinal cord injury for several years, I have first-hand experience of the problems that can start to affect your body when you use a manual wheelchair daily. As a researcher, this got me thinking about how common this problem is, what factors may be exacerbating this problem, and hopefully what we could do to prevent it.

This prompted me and my colleagues to set up a research project in partnership

with The Regional Spinal Cord Injury Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast.

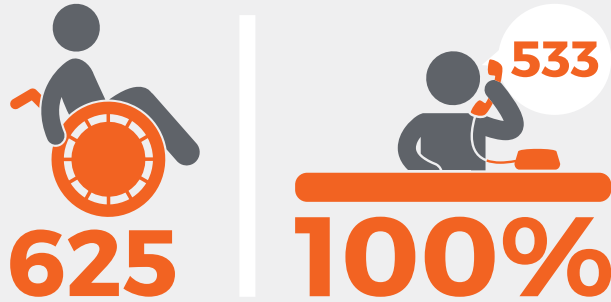
As part of our research study, we're investigating the long-term physical, psychological and social effects of sustained wheelchair use in spinal cord injured people. This will help us to get a better picture of what those effects are, and what support people will need to adjust to those changes.

Ulster University are currently recruiting participants for this study so if you'd like to be involved, please contact Adrienne McCann on 07783225353 or email her at mccann-a18@email.ulster.ac.uk

Back Up's impact in 2016/17

881

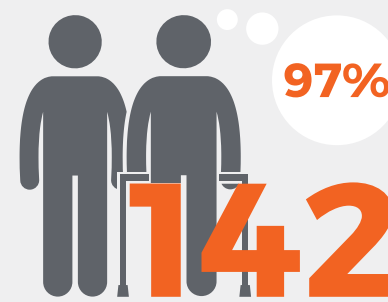
Each year, around 1,000 people sustain a spinal cord injury. In 2016/17 we reached 881 newly injured people – the highest number in Back Up's history.



Outreach and Support

We trained **625 people** in wheelchair skills, including **22 Under 18s**, with **91%** of respondents increasing in confidence

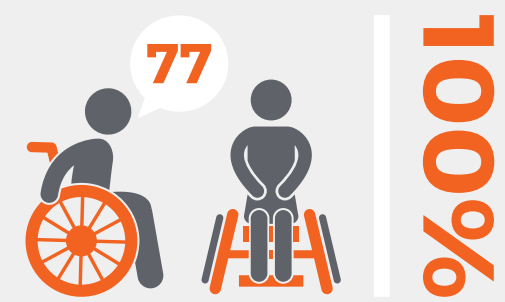
533 people were supported by telephone with **100%** of respondents more aware of **possibilities in life**



Mentoring

We matched **142 people**, including **39 family members**, with a mentor

97% of people who were mentored felt more **able to cope** with their situation



Courses

72 people attended our residential courses and **100%** would recommend them to a friend

100% of children and young people on courses improved in two or more areas of life: **wheelchair skills, confidence, making friends and independence**



Back Up to Work

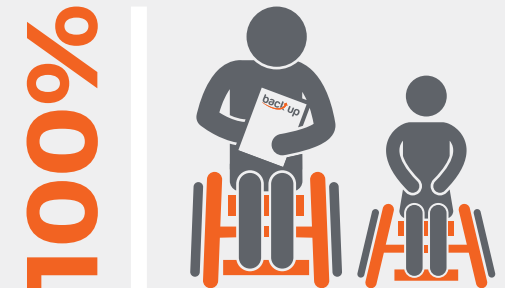
100% of people who attended our Back Up to Work course achieved their **personal aims**



Schools inclusion service

We supported **33** children and young people to be more **included at school**

100% of parents surveyed felt that their child was **more included** after a school visit



Adult & youth volunteering

All our **eight** new young volunteers improved their **confidence, skills and motivation**

100% of our adult wheelchair skills trainers surveyed felt motivated and that their contribution made a difference



TILITE Rigid Wheelchairs
Folding Wheelchairs
Paediatric Wheelchairs

More style. More performance. More choice.



Visit our website at
www.gerald-simonds.co.uk

TILITE
GERALD SIMONDS
BACK UP
-THE ULTIMATE TEAM.

Gerald Simonds are sole UK distributors for TiLite. Call us **FREE** on **0800 220975** to arrange a demonstration or for more details.



Receive **5%** off the cost
of any new wheelchair from the **Gerald Simonds** range
& we will donate a further 3% of the value of every order
received to **back up**

This voucher has no cash value. It is only valid for new orders and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer.

Gerald Simonds Healthcare Ltd.

Freephone 0800 220975 email: info@gerald-simonds.co.uk

