



Thriving at any age: all people with a spinal cord injury are able to reach their full potential.



Setting the scene

Spinal cord injury can affect anyone, at any age. Whether you sustain a spinal cord injury aged one or 101, Back Up is there for you. The support that an individual and their family needs will differ according to their life stage and the length of time that they have been living with an injury. Our focus will be on helping people at the period of greatest need. In many cases this will be the early stages after an injury as people learn new skills, get back to school or work, and rebuild their confidence.

We are the only charity in the UK who provides dedicated support for children and young people with a spinal cord injury. Each year around 100 children and young people sustain a spinal cord injury. We believe that children and young people with a spinal cord injury should have the same opportunities as any other young person. Our children and young people services strive for equal access to education, opportunity, and advancement for all children and young people with spinal cord injury, from early years through to the transition to adulthood.

Just as children and young people face unique challenges, those sustaining an injury later on in life will face a different set of challenges. The majority of people who sustain spinal cord injuries will be adults. Over 40% of people sustaining injuries are over 60 years old. Whilst our courses and services are open to people of all ages, over the course of the strategy we will better tailor our offer to older people.

What did children and young people with a spinal cord injury tell us...



“Back Up is there for the serious times and the fun ones.”

“Teach parents about spinal cord injury kids and how to cope.”

“Find your limits and push them.”

What did older people with a spinal cord injury tell us...

“I have developed ‘new’ problems that it would be good to talk through. **The courses are also probably more relevant now than they were early in my injury.**”

“After living with a spinal cord injury for over 25 years without any support, **I found the services that Back Up offered have been invaluable** in helping me to adapt and cope with the changes I am now going through due to living with a long term spinal cord injury.”

“I’m quite an old paraplegic-26 years- so I’ve adapted.... Learning skills after 20 years was however an eye opener and **increased my independence further.**”

What we will achieve by 2025

- We will provide support to every child and young person with a spinal cord injury who wants our help, to ensure that they are fully included in their education and that their voice is heard in this process. We will be there for any teacher, school, college or university that needs our support around inclusion and meeting the needs of a child or young person with a spinal cord injury, to ensure they have a positive education experience.
- We will provide specialist advice and information to children and young people so that they can access care, equipment and social support they need. We will work in collaboration with the NHS to ensure that all children and young people with a spinal cord injury receive the treatment that they deserve through the established Children and Young Person’s Pathway.
- Our support will be targeted at times of greatest need. We will continue to help people affected by spinal cord injury overcome barriers they may face in their education, career, family life, hobbies and social life, so that they can live the life they want. We will have increased our resources for people who are ageing with spinal cord injury, and have established a course for newly injured people who have sustained a spinal cord injury later in life.

