



back**up**

transforming lives after spinal cord injury

Impact report 2018/19



Welcome



Since Mike Nemesvary founded Back Up in 1986, people have been at the heart of the charity's mission. Back then, it was Mike's friends who rallied around to help run our first ski course. Today, it's our wonderful volunteers, fundraisers and supporters who've made it possible for us to support 1,551 people affected by spinal cord injury in 2018/19.

Last year, we saw an unprecedented level of demand for our education inclusion service. Our staff team and volunteers supported 45 children and young people with a spinal cord injury at all levels of education – all of whom felt happier after receiving our support.

Our increased presence at The Queen Elizabeth National Spinal Injuries Unit, Glasgow, has helped us strengthen relationships and contribute at every single patient education session. We've also supported growing numbers of family members through telephone support and relatives' days across the UK, and we recruited our first coordinator solely dedicated to helping people into employment.

Whether you're a part of our passionate army of over 400 volunteers, one of our fabulous fundraisers, a generous long-term supporter, or a committed corporate partner, we thank you for making everything we achieved possible.

To find out more about the vital impact your contribution makes, please read on to hear from some of the people we supported last year – eight individuals who can now see a life full of opportunities.

If you've never supported Back Up before, please join us as we work towards a world where everyone affected by spinal cord injury can realise their full potential.

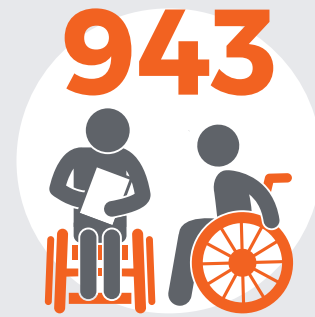
Sarah Bryan | CEO

The impact of Back Up's work in 2018/19

Thank you for making our vital work possible.



people were supported by Back Up in 2018/19



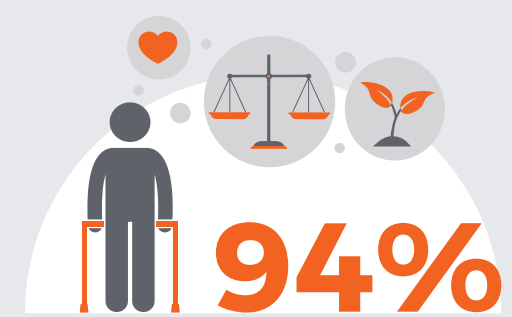
We registered **801** new people with a spinal cord injury and **142** family members to receive our support



of adult participants on our life skills and activity courses achieved their personal aims



people were supported by telephone on topics like relationships, travel, work and bladder management



of people who were mentored increased in at least three positive coping strategies



relatives' days took place across five UK spinal cord injury centres



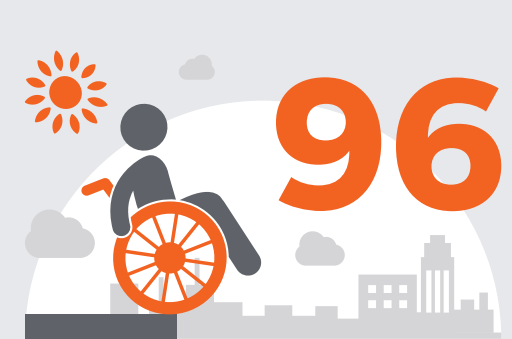
people were matched with a trained mentor to help them make positive changes in their lives



people were trained in wheelchair skills in hospitals, with **94%** learning new skills after attending a session



children and young people with a spinal cord injury were supported at different stages of their education, and **all of them** felt happier after receiving Back Up's help



people were trained to use wheelchair skills to tackle real-life obstacles outside the hospital



Melanie

“Back Up made life feel exciting again.”

In January 2018, I was out cycling on the country roads outside Inverness one day. I was on my way home when a driver suddenly hit me from behind.

At first, I didn't want to know anything about being paralysed. I was so worried that I was going to lose a big part of my life. But even though months of rehabilitation lay ahead, I soon began to think about what opportunities might be open to me.

I'd seen in a brochure that Back Up offered skiing courses abroad and applied for a place. Taking a long-haul flight to Colorado gave me so much confidence. I didn't feel like a fish out of water because I was with a group of people who were all in the same boat. It made me realise that I could still travel independently.

By the middle of the week, I was flying down the mountain, completely in my element, and thinking about going skiing with my friends and family next year. Before the course, I never thought any of this would be possible.

Since I've been home, I've started to get back into sports. I'm hoping to start wheelchair racing soon.

There's a lot of support out there, but Back Up made life feel exciting again. They give you opportunities to do things you didn't think were possible, and that makes a massive difference.

Jemma and Ady

“Ady and I have come so far, and Back Up have been there through everything.”

Ady moved into my place on the 6 March 2017. Five days later, he had his accident. We were visiting some friends in Nottingham and, as Ady's a roofer, he was going to clean their gutter – something he'd done thousands of times. But this time, he fell off the roof.

I was going up and down to Nottingham hospital for weeks. Ady was very poorly, and we nearly lost him several times. It was horrendous. They took him to Sheffield spinal centre when a bed became available. Everything was really traumatic because they told us very little. I started speaking to Back Up soon after Ady's injury to get some answers.

I had a billion questions and talking to Back Up helped so much. When Ady came home, they even matched me with one of their mentors called Rebekah, who's also the partner of someone with a high level injury. I could ask her really personal questions about sex and how Ady and I could still be intimate. Rebekah was brilliant, and I owe her a hell of a lot from our chats. She was an encyclopedia on all the challenges Ady and I were facing.

Both of us want to be mentors now. It's a vital service and you can talk about anything you want. Ady and I have come so far, and Back Up have been there through everything.





Tina

“My confidence just soared. I feel like I could speak up about any adaptations I might need now.”

I first came across Back Up when I was looking for more emotional support after my long stay in hospital. Andy, the charity's outreach manager, explained about the services they provide, including their Back Up to Work course. He encouraged me to go along so that I could, one day, return to work with confidence.

The group bonded so well and – because my injury was the most recent – I was able to learn a lot from everyone. The facilitator of the course was amazing too, and her absolute conviction that work was possible sort of spilled over into all of us. My confidence just soared. I feel like I could speak up about any adaptations I might need now, like raising a computer monitor to my eye level so that there's no pressure on my neck, which is secured with metal rods. The course dispelled lots of fears and I gained so much from the experience.

It was at this time that I also decided to accept Back Up's offer of a mentor. Neil has a very similar injury level to mine, and he's able to walk too. We talk about pain management, confidence levels, future goals, and emotional wellbeing. In fact, I can talk to Neil about anything because I know he understands. Neil lifted me out of my darkness, and I'm eternally grateful to Back Up for that.



Lynda and Manny

“I think the fact that Back Up’s services are provided by people who are personally affected by spinal cord injury is vital.”

Before Manny’s injury, our family had recently moved to a new area. Manny was looking forward to starting school and making new friends.

Soon after, my husband and I found out that Manny had a tumour on his spine. We had no indication that anything was wrong and then suddenly Manny had to have an operation. They removed most of the tumour, but the rest was too tightly entwined and left Manny paralysed from the chest down.

When Manny was at Stoke Mandeville spinal centre, someone mentioned that Back Up could do an assembly at Manny’s school about what it’s like to have a spinal cord injury. We thought it was a great idea, and Sharon – one of Back Up’s volunteers – came to do the talk.

She made it clear to the staff and children that – whether Manny uses a wheelchair or not – he can still make his own decisions and be independent. It was also incredibly useful to have Sharon at all our meetings with the school, as she has a spinal cord injury and made lots of suggestions on how we can make life easier for Manny.

I think the fact that Back Up’s services are provided by people who are personally affected by spinal cord injury is vital. The support is stronger when someone has that empathy with what you’re going through.

Paul

“I've made the decision that my injury isn't going to define me.”

I led a busy life prior to my injury. My wife, Julie, and I have three children who were all at school. I was working as a GP and as an associate medical director at NHS Highland.

On 30 August 2018, I was cycling down a hill and lost control at the bottom. My bike went off the road, and I landed on some rocks.

I was taken to the Glasgow spinal unit straight away. Four weeks into my rehabilitation, I met Rich, who's a member of Back Up's outreach team. He had a spinal cord injury and was so positive and well adjusted. But at the time, I struggled to see things that way. How would I exercise, transfer out of my chair and just get through daily life?

Back Up's wheelchair skills sessions were very important in this regard. Rich not only taught me how to get up and down kerbs and do back wheel balances, he gave me the confidence to do these skills independently. Throughout my time at the spinal unit, Rich was a constant presence and source of advice.

I recently got a car with hand controls and have returned to my job as a medical director. I've made the decision that my injury isn't going to define me.

To me, Rich was an inspiration as well as a teacher. He made life seem possible and then showed me how to live it.





Shaun

“Knowing that I’ve been able to pass on my knowledge and use my experience to help others is so rewarding.”

In May 1999, I had a motorcycle accident. I broke four vertebrae, which caused a complete break of my spinal cord. The day of the accident is a complete blank. I just remember waking up in hospital.

At first, I didn’t really engage with Back Up. I wanted to deal with the disability my own way. Fortunately, the support of my friends and family helped me to get through the early years.

But I know from personal experience that you can struggle after an injury, so I applied to become a volunteer wheelchair skills trainer to give back.

I go to each session and just try to help people as much as I can. Knowing that I’ve been able to pass on my knowledge and use my experience to help others is so rewarding. And when I see someone master a new skill, I feel on top of the world.

Volunteering has even helped me to push my own limits. I taught skills on one of Back Up’s multi-activity courses, and I had the chance to go up mountains, try out the zip line and go canoeing – things that I never thought were possible in the 19 years I’ve had my injury.

Back Up is a fantastic charity. They genuinely care about the work they do and changing people’s lives.

Lillian

“I do struggle sometimes, but I know I can ring Back Up, and someone will be there to help.”

Before my injury, I never seemed to sit still. I went to Australia twice a year to see my daughter and grandchildren. If I wasn't with my family, my time was occupied with walking, travelling, Scottish country dancing, and helping people in my community.

On 26 March 2017, I was driving home one day when a car drove straight into me. I spent ten weeks in intensive care before I was transferred to a spinal centre.

When I got home, my daughter contacted Back Up about mentoring. She thought it might help me as I was having a very tough time. I was matched with a mentor called Linda, who has a similar level of injury to me. Linda encouraged me to do lots of things, like be more assertive with my care team.

You can lose your voice in a hospital because everyone does everything for you. Linda gave me the confidence to tell my PAs what I need and how I need it to be done.

She also made travel feel possible again. Linda's gone to New Zealand, and she gave me a lot of advice on long-haul flights, so I'm going to try and visit my family in Australia this year.

I do struggle sometimes, but I know I can ring Back Up, and someone will be there to help.



Jenny

“Speaking to Back Up, I felt heard and understood for the first time.”

I led a very active life before my injury – lots of walking, running and team sports. I travelled regularly and hiked up mountains all the time. In March 2015, I was out running one day when suddenly my foot gave way.

I eventually underwent tests which showed that the problem was originating from my spine. My GP referred me to two neurologists, but they gave me no information about spinal cord injury.

At this point, I was so mentally drained from the lack of support. Luckily, a physiotherapist told me about Back Up. I've been on an upward trajectory since the day I called. Speaking to Back Up, I felt heard and understood for the first time.

They encouraged me to attend the Next Steps course – specifically for people with a spinal cord injury who can walk. It was so good to meet people who were in a similar situation and to just laugh again. I think it also helped me realise that it's okay not to have energy all the time. I'd been grieving for my former active life, but the course helped me to accept my new situation.

I recently managed to get a new state-of-the-art orthotic, which I can attach to my walking boots. This means I can start going up mountains again.

When I think back to that first call, it's with a huge sense of gratitude because Back Up is the main reason I'm in the positive place I am now.





Plans for the future

On World Spinal Cord Injury Day 5 September, we set the groundwork for our new five-year strategy at our annual trustee away day. These preliminary ideas will be refined by research, consultation and focus groups throughout the year – all to inform our new strategic plan, which will take us through to 2025.

In April 2019, Back Up secured funding to develop the young person's NHS care pathway – a specialist plan to ensure all newly injured children and young people receive the specialist care they deserve. In 2019/2020, the draft pathway will be piloted by spinal cord injury centres and children's hospitals across the UK. We will then present a revised pathway to healthcare professionals to demonstrate the benefits of specialist care plans for all newly injured children and young people.

With our new vocation coordinator in post, we have exciting plans to expand our Back Up to Work service. Our new coordinator will develop an Early Intervention Vocational Rehabilitation (EiVR) model, which will encourage proactive discussions around employment in spinal centres and general hospitals – helping newly injured people to see that returning to work and volunteering is achievable.

Last year, we introduced a section on our website with information on pain management, and we plan to add more resources on a range of issues next year – ensuring that vital information is accessible to all.

All our services are delivered by trained volunteers, and we believe that it's essential to develop and increase the size of our volunteer pool to future-proof our services. For that reason, we will be focusing on providing more training opportunities for current volunteers and increasing the number of volunteer training sessions we run in 2019/20.

The difference our volunteers make

Our vital work is made possible by a passionate army of over 400 volunteers, whose contribution is felt at all levels of the charity. Back Up was founded by volunteers and, to this day, volunteering remains at the heart of everything we do.

Last year, we estimate that our volunteers contributed the following hours to our work



Volunteers on our Back Up to Work courses gave **1,080 hours** to help people work towards their employment goals



Volunteer mentors spent **2,083 hours** supporting people to make positive changes in their lives



Office volunteers gave **1,440 hours** of their time to provide fundraising and administrative support



Our course volunteers amassed **7,060 hours** as group leaders, buddies, nurses and personal assistants (PAs)



U18s volunteers spent **376 hours** shaping our services and supporting other children and young people with skills and advice

In total, we estimate that our volunteers contributed around **17,300 hours** to our work. A heart-felt thank you to each and every volunteer for all you do to support Back Up.



Our volunteers spent **959 hours** delivering wheelchair skills and patient education sessions



Our family volunteers gave us **250 hours** of their time to support family members of people with a spinal cord injury



Back Up's mentor trainers committed **99 hours** to deliver comprehensive training and guidance to mentors



Our fundraising volunteers gave **1,266 hours** planning our special events, raising money at bucket collections and supporting our work



Our education advocates gave **194 hours** of their time to support children and young people with a spinal cord injury



Our trustees dedicated **986 hours** to govern Back Up and shape the charity's future

How we raised our money

As Back Up receives no government funding, we rely entirely on our fantastic supporters, fundraisers, corporate sponsors and charitable trusts to make our work possible. We simply couldn't do it without them.



Our supporters, including **333** committed regular givers, donated **£151,205** to Back Up. We received **£10,500** from gifts in wills and **£2,800** in donations in memory of loved ones.



83 companies volunteered over **1,600 hours** of time to help us deliver our services and raised **£459,000** through sponsorship, corporate events and office fundraising.



Last year, we had close to **900 guests** attend one of our exciting major events which raised over **£345,000** towards Back Up's vital services.



65 charitable trusts, including The National Lottery Community Fund in both England and Scotland, generously gave us a total of **£527,000** to fund our services.



Over 300 fundraisers ran, cycled, pushed and kayaked their way to raise **£185,000** in challenge events for Back Up.



We received **£10,357** from **22 schools** and clubs and **£43,318** from people holding their own events.

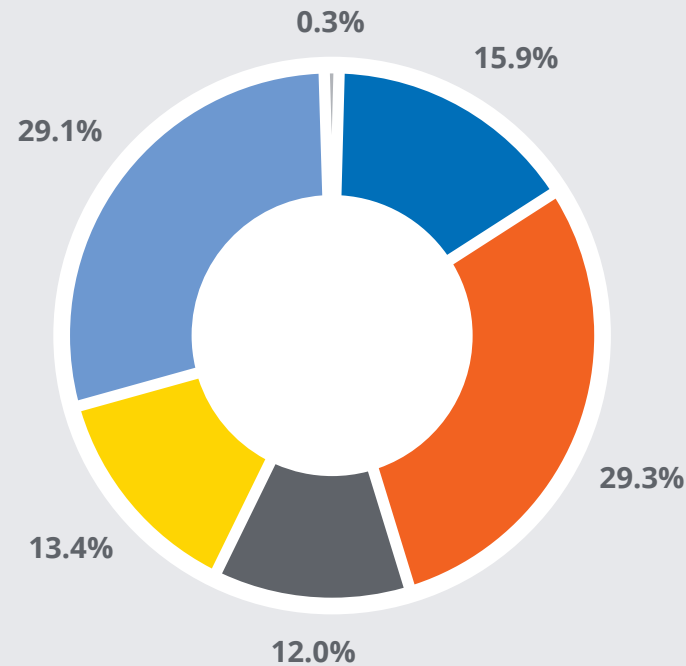
Last year, we raised £1,795,000 towards our work – the most we've ever raised. To all the wonderful people and organisations who have contributed to Back Up, we want to thank you on behalf of everyone who has benefited from your support.

THANK YOU!



Where our money came from

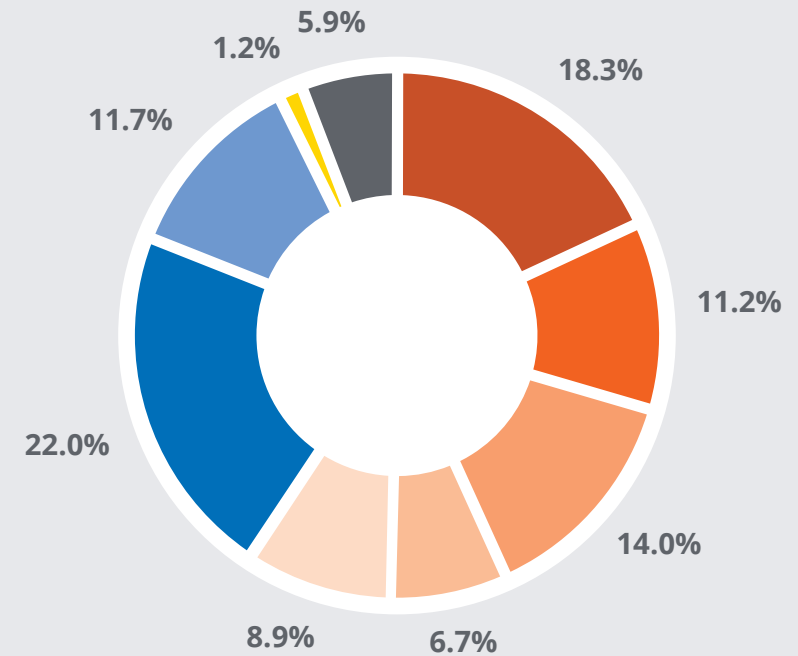
How we raised our £1,795,000 income in 2018/19



- Corporate (15.9%)
- Trusts (29.3%)
- Donations (12.0%)
- Community & Challenge (13.4%)
- Trading & Events (29.1%)
- Investment (0.3%)

Where our money went

How we allocated our £1,795,000 income in 2018/19



- Outreach & Support (18.3%)
- Mentoring Services (11.2%)
- Courses (14.0%)
- U18's (6.7%)
- Awareness (8.9%)
- Fundraising (22.0%)
- Trading & Events (11.7%)
- Governance (1.2%)
- Reserves (5.9%)

Most of our income goes directly to our services, but we couldn't function as a charity without spending on fundraising and governance to ensure the sustainability of our services for future generations.

Acknowledgements

We value the support of every individual and organisation who supports us, no matter how big or small their donation, but we'd like to mention a few who really went the extra mile this year.

Trustees

Helen Cooke
David Fraser
Rebecca Hill (Chair)
Crispin Longden (Vice Chair)
Anne Luttmann-Johnson
Martine Petetin
Claire Pimm
Richard Smith (Hon Treasurer)
Ben Sneesby
Rebecca Stevenson
Dr Clair Turnbull
Jo Wright

Patrons

Konrad Bartelski
Martin Bell
Barbara Broccoli
Eric Lanlard
Sophie Morgan
Mike Nemesvary
Jess Stock

Individuals

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John and Sue Adams
Julie Allen
Mark Armour
Helen Beattie
Chirsty Bennett
Paul Brand
Catherine Calder
Heath Callan
Jeremy Cowdrey
Debbie and Paul Cragg
Stuart Dench
Jean Egbunike
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Jo Sheasby
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Mary Skinner
Mark Somerset
Merryn Thomas
Susie Turnbull
Anne Urban
Patrick Woodall
Jo Wright
Robert Yeung

Companies

ACG Architects
Almacantar
Aspire Law
Big Yellow
BMO
Bolt Burdon Kemp
Brookfield Development
CliniMed Limited
Coloplast
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Hollister
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Trusts & Foundations

BBC Children In Need
The National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities
Bothwell Charitable Trust
Bruce Wake Charitable Trust
Childwick Trust
Edith Lilian Harrison 2000 Foundation
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Henry Smith Charity
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St James's Place Foundation
William Allen Young Charitable Trust






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We'd like to thank our amazing photographer Chris Marchant for providing the majority of the photographic images used in this impact report, as well as Guy Harrop, Alison Gibbert, Hannah Houston, Konrad Bartelski and Calvert Trust Exmoor, for providing additional images.



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