



Partners in possibility
after spinal cord injury

Review of 25/26



Goal	Our Focus to 2030	25/26 Objectives	25/26 Outcomes
<p>Living Confidently – Empowering people with a spinal cord injury with the confidence, knowledge and practical skills to live a full and independent life</p>	<p>Expand Regional Delivery: We will grow the number and variety of our in-person services, closer to where people live, offering support when it matters. We'll ensure our services better reflect the diversity of the spinal cord injury community. We will deliver services in every region of the UK.</p>	<p>We will deliver 15 in-person courses, including our first City Skills Cymru course in Cardiff.</p> <p>90% of those attending Back Up courses will report having achieved their personal aims.</p> <p>We will develop a new model for the delivery of regional courses.</p>	<p>We delivered 15 in-person courses. As part of our focus on delivering in-person services closer to where people live, we delivered courses in Cardiff, Manchester, Bristol, Bath, Leeds, Edinburgh, Exmoor and the Lake District. We have plans developed for City Skills Belfast.</p> <p>97% of those attending a Back Up course reported having achieved their personal aims.</p> <p>We have developed plans for 'At Home with Back Up', a new residential course aimed at easing the transition from hospital to home. This is linked to spinal cord injury centres. We are seeking funding.</p> <p>"The course changed everything. I learned practical wheelchair skills – pushing myself around Cardiff Bay, managing curbs, and handling everyday obstacles. It built my confidence to get out on my own."</p>
	<p>Growing Digital Resources: Our online support will be available right from the beginning of the adjustment process so that individuals have the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to live life independently.</p> <p>Using data and insight we'll target our services to those who need them the most.</p>	<p>We will have delivered at least 40,000 individual support interventions across all services using a range of channels and methods.</p> <p>Our Data and Systems Transformation programme will support us to make better use of our data enabling us to target support to those who need it the most.</p>	<p>We have delivered 51,418 individual support interventions, a 16% increase from 43,934 in 24/25. This is not web hits but individual instances across our services where we have provided support.</p> <p>Our Data and Systems Transformation programme is on track to go live in June 2026. Making better use of our data, we will become better at targeting support to those who need it the most.</p> <p>"I'm still discovering what life looks like now – whenever I have a question or a concern, I reach out to the Back Up team. From employment guidance to information about driving, their support is invaluable."</p>
	<p>Supporting Return to Work, Education and Volunteering: We'll be leaders in helping people with spinal cord injury return to work, education or volunteering, taking a confidence-building approach to addressing life's barriers in areas such as travel and transport so that they don't get in the way or stop people realising their ambitions.</p> <p>We will collaborate with education providers, employers, the NHS, partner charities and other organisations to enable people with spinal cord injury to realise their ambitions.</p>	<p>We will deliver a second season of our 'Back Up and Thriving' podcast which empowers people with spinal cord injuries to travel confidently.</p> <p>60% of people will be in work, education or volunteering 6-12 months after attending a Skills for Work course.</p>	<p>Our second series of Back Up and Thriving podcast launched including discussions with Harry Potter stuntman David Holmes, junior doctor, author and Back Up trustee Grace Spence Green and actor and writer Kyla Harris. The series builds travel confidence by sharing practical tips to overcome challenges.</p> <p>63% of people are in work, education or volunteering 6-12 months after attending a Skills for Work course.</p> <p>"I was struggling to find employment...Through the programme I was offered a placement at Savills, where I got to shadow their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team – that was really interesting."</p>



Goal

Everyone Thriving – Ensuring all individuals affected by spinal cord injury can reach their full potential

Our Focus to 2030

Reaching Those Who Need Us the Most:

Our services will be targeted at those who need us most. We will focus on engaging with and removing barriers for people who face the greatest challenges in adjusting to life following spinal cord injury – at those times when we can have the most impact.

Tailored Support for Every Stage of Life:

From childhood to old age, we will tailor our approach to what matters to an individual throughout their lives. Whatever background or level of injury – we will be there helping people fulfil their education, career, family life, travel, hobbies and social life goals, so that they can live the life they want.

Supporting Children and Young People:

We will be there for every child and young person affected by spinal cord injury – giving young people and their families the skills, confidence and knowledge to overcome barriers and open up a world of possibility.

25/26 Objectives

We will better map our stakeholders to understand how we can communicate with traditionally 'hard-to-reach' groups; potentially forming partnerships and going to those groups rather than expecting them to come to us.

We will have supported at least 3,175 people affected by spinal cord injury across all age groups, up from 2,921.

We will map our service offers to key life stages, supporting our teams to target the right interventions at the right time.

We will continue to develop resources for those ageing with a spinal cord injury.

We will develop a new digital resource aimed at giving children, young people and their families crucial advice and guidance.

We will do more to ensure the voices of children and young people affected by spinal cord injury are heard at a board level.

25/26 Outcomes

We have established strong relationships with NHS regional spinal cord injury link workers. This is supporting Back Up's Outreach team to reach beyond the specialist units – visiting the main referring hospitals to meet with patients who have sustained a spinal cord injury and deliver wheelchair skills training.

New patient referral processes have been established, with NHS staff proactively referring those affected by spinal cord injury who are not receiving inpatient support from the specialist spinal cord injury centres.

We are working with Aspire's assistive technology team to support those with high level spinal cord injuries to access our digital support services.

“We think (Back Up's) Outreach Coordinator plays a crucial role on the unit, introducing patients to Back Up and the services you provide. (They are) living proof to patients and relatives that there is a good quality of life to be had after sustaining a spinal cord injury.”

We have supported 2,799 people affected by spinal cord injury across all age groups. This is a decrease from 2,921 last year although we have provided more interventions (instances of support). For comparison, on average in the year 24/25, each person received up to 15 instances of support. This has risen to 18 in 25/26.

Through our brand development work we have identified key life stages and grouped our services across the themes of possibility, understanding, community and challenge, enabling us to be clearer about what we offer.

We have worked hard to ensure that the stories we share reflect the experiences of those ageing with a spinal cord injury. The topic was also featured in September's Back Up Lounge.

“I was just 10 when I sustained my spinal cord injury and Back Up has been with me ever since - supporting me, answering my questions, and showing me that life with a spinal cord injury is still full of opportunities.”

We have developed the concept for a new digital tool which is designed to support children, young people and their families as they grow older; providing advice and guidance from early years up to 25, including further and higher education and apprenticeships. We are actively seeking funding to build and promote the tool.

Our Future Trustee programme focused on what more we could do to ensure the voices of children and young people affected by spinal cord injury are heard at board level. We now have a trustee who is our lead trustee for this area and we are aligning our youth advisory group meetings with our board meetings.

“I tried so many fun activities and learned so many skills – I don't know where I'd be without that experience.”



Goal

Meaningful Connection – Creating opportunities for people affected by spinal cord injury to connect with others in similar situations to achieve their goals.

Our Focus to 2030

Creating Meaningful Connections: We will create more opportunities for people affected by spinal cord injury to connect with others who understand their experience. These connections will help people gain confidence and practical support, guiding them through their adjustment to life post-injury. We will provide clear pathways for individuals to become supporters and mentors, helping others along their journey.

Supporting Families: We will be leaders in supporting family members of those with a spinal cord injury. This begins with the acute phase, through information and support online and in-person at relatives' days, to post-discharge from the hospital through peer mentoring, family rehabilitation, online courses and dedicated digital pathways. Helping family members recognise that a positive future is possible.

Partnerships for Greater Impact We will work alongside the NHS, wheelchair services and other partner organisations to reach those who may not have access to specialist spinal cord injury centres. By sharing resources based on lived experience we'll challenge negative perceptions of spinal cord injury and show that a positive future is possible.

25/26 Objectives

We will establish 380 peer connections, either through medium-term mentoring relationships or one-off meaningful conversations between peers.

We will develop clearer pathways for people to support us whether through volunteering, fundraising or by raising awareness.

We will attend or deliver 24 family support events engaging at least 180 family members.

80% of families will report feeling more supported as a result of our work.

We will actively engage with professionals who support people affected by spinal cord injury, raising awareness of the full range of Back Up's services.

25/26 Outcomes

We established 468 peer connections, eight of them being for children and young people under 18 years of age. 251 of these are medium-term mentoring relationships and 217 are one-off conversations.

A new Community and Engagement Fundraising Volunteer role has been developed and launched, presenting an opportunity for active and new volunteers to raise awareness of Back Up within their local communities. Training is being rolled out which raises awareness of the variety of ways in which people can get involved.

"I was connected with a fantastic mentor who had a similar injury to me. Having the opportunity to talk to somebody who truly understood was invaluable, and there wasn't a question I couldn't ask."

We have attended 23 family support events and engaged 193 family members.

95% of families reported feeling more supported as a result of our work.

"I went to a relatives' afternoon in Sheffield, and it was such a relief to meet others in the same situation. We shared experiences, got practical advice, and I left feeling reassured."

This year we have focused on moving beyond the specialist spinal cord injury centres to other healthcare settings such as major trauma centres, district general hospitals and neuro rehab facilities across the UK.

We have introduced Back Up to healthcare professionals from a wide range of non spinal cord injury specialist healthcare settings through regional engagement meetings, which helps signposting by showcasing all that Back Up can offer to their patients.

"It is strengthening to know of the support available from all the disciplines, both in the Spinal Unit and supporting charities...how lucky we are to have all this expertise."





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