



COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK

SUPPORT GROUP WELCOME PACK

A practical guide for Community Leaders and approved groups



Supporting People | Raising Awareness | Building Community

Stronger together. Beyond limits.

www.moorethanarthritis.co.uk | info@moorethanarthritis.co.uk | [@mta_community](https://www.instagram.com/mta_community)

Facebook: Moore Than Arthritis | LinkedIn: Moore Than Arthritis Ltd

i Document information

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Organisation	Moore Than Arthritis Ltd
Owner	Moore Than Arthritis
Contact	info@moorethanarthritis.co.uk
Review	At least annually and after any significant legal, safeguarding or operational change.

Important

This pack is an operational starter resource. It does not replace legal advice, safeguarding training, venue-specific procedures, insurance requirements or professional clinical guidance. Local groups must follow the law, venue rules and local safeguarding pathways that apply to them.

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Welcome to the Moore Than Arthritis Support Group Network.

Moore Than Arthritis was born from lived experience. Following my diagnosis of Psoriatic Arthritis, I learned that arthritis is about far more than painful joints. It can affect energy, sleep, confidence, relationships, work, mental wellbeing and everyday independence.

I also learned how important it is to have people who listen, understand and remind you that you are not alone. This welcome pack has been created to help compassionate people build those connections in their own communities whether through an online group, a local meeting, a gentle activity or a simple cuppa and conversation.

By stepping forward as a Community Leader, you are helping create a safe, welcoming and inclusive place where people can share experiences, access trusted signposting and feel part of something hopeful.



1 Welcome from Wayne Moore

Thank you for choosing to help us support people, raise awareness and build community.

Wayne Moore

Founder, Moore Than Arthritis

Our promise

No one should feel they have to face arthritis or another long-term health condition alone.

2 About Moore Than Arthritis and our support groups

Moore Than Arthritis is a lived-experience-led organisation supporting people affected by arthritis, autoimmune conditions, chronic pain, invisible disabilities and other long-term health conditions.

- Create welcoming spaces for connection, shared understanding and encouragement.
- Provide trusted information and practical resources without replacing professional advice.
- Raise awareness of visible and invisible challenges.
- Promote inclusion in communities, workplaces, sport and everyday life.
- Celebrate the strengths, achievements and contributions of people living beyond a diagnosis.

What a support group is

A peer-support space where people can connect, listen, share lived experience and access appropriate signposting.

Mission

To support people, raise awareness and build a community that helps individuals live beyond their diagnosis.

What a support group is not

A clinical service, counselling service, emergency service or place to diagnose conditions, recommend treatments or replace professional healthcare advice.

Vision

A future where everyone affected by arthritis or a long-term health condition feels understood, included, connected and able to participate in community life.

Values

Compassion	We respond with kindness and empathy.
Respect	We value every person and every lived experience.
Inclusion	We remove barriers and welcome difference.
Hope	We focus on possibility without minimising difficulty.
Empowerment	We help people make informed choices and use their voice.

3 Our mission, vision and values

5 Starting your support group

Integrity

We are honest about our role, limits and responsibilities.

4 Becoming a Community Leader

Community Leaders help create the tone, safety and consistency of each group. You do not need to be a healthcare professional. You do need to be reliable, respectful, inclusive and willing to follow the Moore Than Arthritis framework.

Core responsibilities

- Welcome members and explain the purpose and boundaries of the group.
- Create a respectful environment and uphold confidentiality.
- Plan meetings, communicate dates and manage practical arrangements.
- Use Moore Than Arthritis branding and approved resources responsibly.
- Signpost to professional, emergency or safeguarding services when needed.
- Keep proportionate attendance, incident and activity records securely.
- Complete simple monthly reporting and ask for support early. **Important boundaries**

- ☐ I will not diagnose conditions or interpret test results.
- ☐ I will not recommend stopping, starting or changing medication.
- ☐ I will not promise confidentiality when someone may be at risk of harm.
- ☐ I will not personally hold more responsibility than I am trained or authorised to manage.
- ☐ I will seek guidance when I am unsure.

1. Choose the purpose and format: online, face-to-face, cuppa and chat, gentle activity, condition-focused or mixed-condition.
2. Complete the Expression of Interest and Registration forms.
3. Agree a name, location or online platform, frequency and accessibility arrangements.
4. Identify at least one deputy or trusted support person where possible.
5. Check venue suitability, insurance requirements, emergency procedures and local safeguarding pathways.
6. Publish clear information about who the group is for, what it offers and what it does not provide.
7. Plan a simple first meeting and start small.

6 Running a great meeting - continued

Possible group formats

☐ Monthly coffee morning	☐ Online peer-support session
☐ Gentle walking or movement group	☐ Condition-specific discussion group
☐ Workplace or community wellbeing group	☐ Family and supporter session

Start small

A consistent group of five people can have more impact than an ambitious plan that is difficult to sustain.

6 Running a great meeting

Suggested 60-90 minute agenda

Time	Activity	Leader notes
10 mins	Welcome, accessibility and group reminders	Explain confidentiality and boundaries.
15 mins	Introductions and check-in	Allow people to pass.
25-35 mins	Discussion topic, guest speaker or activity	Keep the conversation balanced.
10 mins	Resources and signposting	Use approved, trusted sources.
10 mins	Feedback and next meeting	Confirm actions and contacts.

Good facilitation

- Use open questions and active listening.
- Make space for quieter voices.
- Respect different experiences and treatment choices.
- Gently redirect unsafe, discriminatory or medical-advice conversations.
- Offer breaks and accessible participation options.
- Close on time and check that nobody leaves in distress without appropriate signposting.

7 Community Guidelines

- ☐ We welcome people with dignity, kindness and respect.
- ☐ We listen without judgement and allow others to finish speaking.

8 Safeguarding and responding to concerns

- ☐ We protect privacy and do not repeat personal stories outside the group.
- ☐ We challenge discrimination, harassment, bullying and stigma.
- ☐ We share personal experience as personal experience - not medical advice.
- ☐ We respect different diagnoses, treatments, cultures, identities and communication needs.
- ☐ We do not pressure people to disclose health details, participate or be photographed.
- ☐ We use social media responsibly and obtain consent before sharing images or stories.
- ☐ We raise concerns promptly when someone may be at risk.

Community standard

Kindness is expected. Safety comes first. Everyone has the right to be heard and the responsibility to help protect the group environment.

Safeguarding means protecting a person's health, wellbeing and human rights and helping them live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Community Leaders must take concerns seriously, respond calmly and follow the agreed reporting route.

Recognise

- A direct disclosure of abuse, neglect, exploitation or self-neglect.
- Unexplained injuries, fear, controlling behaviour or sudden changes.
- A child or adult who appears unsafe, coerced, neglected or unable to protect themselves.
- Threats of serious harm to self or others.

Respond

- Listen without interrogating or promising secrecy.
- Reassure the person that they were right to speak.
- Record the facts, using their own words where possible.
- If there is immediate danger or urgent medical risk, call 999.
- Otherwise contact info@moorethanarthritis.co.uk and follow the relevant local authority pathway.
- Do not investigate the concern yourself.

Children and young people

Groups involving anyone under 18 require additional approval, appropriate safeguarding arrangements, consent and leader checks before activity begins.

9 Meeting and venue checklist

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Venue or online room confirmed | ☐ Accessibility and reasonable adjustments checked |
| ☐ Emergency exits and first-aid arrangements known | ☐ Toilets and seating suitable |

10 Resources available

☐ Refreshments and allergy information considered	☐ Welcome sign or joining instructions prepared
☐ Agenda and resources ready	☐ Attendance process prepared
☐ Community Guidelines available	☐ Safeguarding and incident forms accessible
☐ Photography consent confirmed before images	☐ Follow-up and next meeting date planned

- Arthritis and long-term condition awareness resources.
- Wellbeing, pacing, fatigue and workplace inclusion guides.
- Campaign content for weekly Moore Than Arthritis series.
- Meeting agendas, checklists, registers and reporting forms.
- Guest speaker invitations and partner outreach templates.
- Promotional posters and social media templates.
- Guidance from the Moore Than Arthritis team.

Use trusted information

Check the publication date, source and purpose of health information. Clearly label personal experience and never present it as clinical advice.

11 Promoting your group

- Create a clear group description and a consistent meeting schedule.
- Use the approved logo and templates without altering the brand identity.
- Share through community centres, libraries, GP and healthcare settings, sports clubs, employers and local networks.
- Use Facebook, LinkedIn and local groups respectfully - follow platform and group rules.
- Explain accessibility, cost, venue, contact method and whether booking is required.
- Never use a member story, name or image without clear permission.

Example invitation

Join us for a friendly cuppa and conversation

A welcoming Moore Than Arthritis support group for people living with arthritis and long-term health conditions. Come as you are. Listen, share or simply connect. This is peer support and does not replace medical advice.

- Ask members what would make the group useful and accessible.

12 Growing your group

- Invite volunteers into small, clear roles.
- Build relationships with health, sport, disability and community organisations.
- Celebrate community contributions and positive outcomes.
- Focus on consistency, quality and safety before increasing frequency or size.
- Discuss fundraising, sponsorship or formal partnerships with Moore Than Arthritis before making commitments in the organisation's name.

Relationships first

The Moore Than Arthritis approach is to build trust, shared value and community impact before pursuing sponsorship or paid partnership.

13 Monthly reporting

A short monthly report helps Moore Than Arthritis understand reach, impact, needs and risks without collecting unnecessary personal information.

- Number of meetings and participants.
- Main topics or activities.
- Accessibility or support requests.
- Positive outcomes and anonymised feedback.
- Incidents, safeguarding concerns or complaints.
- Resources requested and support needed.
- Planned dates and opportunities for the next month.

Privacy

Report themes and totals wherever possible. Do not include detailed health information or identifiable stories unless there is a clear purpose, appropriate consent and secure handling.

14 Support from Moore Than Arthritis

- Guidance through info@moorethanarthritis.co.uk.
- Approved branded templates and educational resources.
- Opportunities to join campaigns, Community Heroes and awareness activity.
- Support with promotion, partnership conversations and group development.
- Regular check-ins and updates as the network develops.

Channel	Official contact
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+ Correct contact details

Website	www.moorethanarthritis.co.uk
Email	info@moorethanarthritis.co.uk
Facebook	Moore Than Arthritis
LinkedIn	Moore Than Arthritis Ltd
X	@mta_community

15 Thank you and next steps

You are helping create places where people feel heard, understood, included and less alone. That matters.

1. Complete the Expression of Interest form.
2. Review this Welcome Pack and the Community Leader Agreement.
3. Discuss your proposed group with Moore Than Arthritis.
4. Complete venue, accessibility, safeguarding and registration checks.
5. Agree a launch plan and first meeting date.
6. Start small, listen carefully and grow with purpose.

Together, we can

Build a stronger, kinder and more connected community - one conversation, one meeting and one act of support at a time.

You are always Moore Than Arthritis.

Reference and review notes

- Care and support statutory guidance, GOV.UK (adult safeguarding framework).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, Department for Education.
- Information Commissioner's Office guidance on data minimisation, purpose limitation and secure handling.
- Local authority safeguarding procedures, venue rules and emergency arrangements applicable to each group.

This pack has reviewed by Moore Than Arthritis before formal launch and will be updated when policy, law, insurance or operational arrangements change.