

Royal
Osteoporosis
Society

Better bone health for everybody

Royal Osteoporosis Society

Our Strategic Direction

January 2018

1. Our new strategy

More than three million people in the UK are estimated to have osteoporosis. The impact on people's lives is huge. It has been calculated that every minute, someone in the UK suffers a broken bone through a fragility fracture.

As the only UK charity dedicated to ending the pain and suffering caused by osteoporosis, the Royal Osteoporosis Society has been making a real difference to people living with osteoporosis for more than 30 years. This, our new strategy, seeks to build on the work we've done so far.

At the heart of this strategy is evidence: research and insights gathered over several years with the help of those living with osteoporosis, health care professionals, researchers, and our inspirational volunteers and staff. Thousands of people with osteoporosis have told us about their needs and aspirations, including their priorities for the charity.

This evidence confirmed the value of our existing activities. We need to continue our work in providing excellent support services to people living with osteoporosis. And we must keep working with the NHS and healthcare professionals to ensure that quality services are available to all those who need them.

But the evidence also made it clear that people want us to stop the pain and suffering for future generations. They want us to get the message out about bone health. And they want us to do more to support the development of new treatments that may one day provide a cure.

Having reviewed all the evidence, we are now ready to restate our vision and our values and share the strategy that helps us deliver a future without osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a condition in which bones lose their strength and are more likely to break.

2. Our mission, vision and values

Our vision A future without osteoporosis

Our mission

We will:

- Improve the bone health of our nation and prevent osteoporosis
- Influence healthcare providers and professionals to deliver high quality healthcare so that people are assessed and treated for osteoporosis earlier
- Provide the best information, support and services to help people with osteoporosis live well
- Drive the research and development of new treatments and therapies that will ultimately beat osteoporosis

Our values

We are:

- **Caring** – we put your bone health and wellbeing first
- **Influential** – we persuade others to take positive action on bone health
- **Innovative** – we are bold, curious and brave about bone health

3. The principles behind our work

All our work is underpinned by three key working principles:

Listening and advocating

We keep the voice of people affected by osteoporosis at the heart of our organisation and bring their voice to bear in all our activities

Partnerships and collaboration

While maintaining our strong identity and purpose, we work in partnership and collaborate with others, wherever this enables us to increase our impact

Evidence and understanding

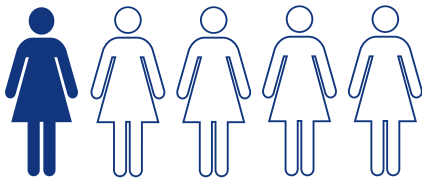
We take an evidence-based approach to all our work, ensuring we have a high level of understanding of patient needs, clinical expertise and research evidence to design our activities

4. Osteoporosis: the challenge we face

Impact on health

Osteoporosis is often referred to as 'the silent condition', in that it is silent until a bone breaks. Even then, it is not always quickly diagnosed.

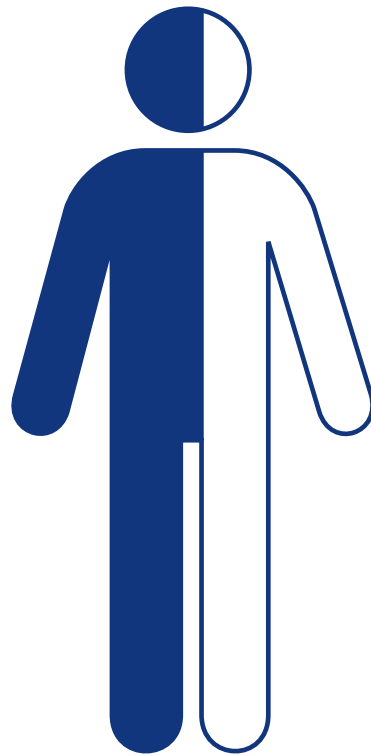
According to a survey by the Royal Osteoporosis Society, **a fifth of women** who have broken a bone...



...**break 3** or more before their osteoporosis is diagnosed.



Spinal fractures frequently lead to height loss and spine curvature, which leaves many people feeling self-conscious and old before their time.

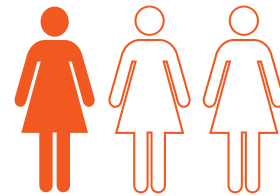


54% of people experience height loss or a change in their body shape

Everyday challenges

Breaking a bone usually means significant short-term pain and inconvenience. But it doesn't stop there. Many people with osteoporosis who break a bone live with long-term pain and disability, especially if their back is affected. The reality of broken bones and the fear of falling impacts on everyday activity, stopping people from doing the things they love.

1 in 3 people who have long term pain describe it as unbearable



Lifestyle change

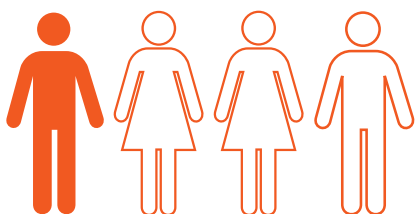
1 in 2 have given up sport or reduced activity



Reduced independence

A broken hip can dramatically reduce independence and can even lead to premature death.

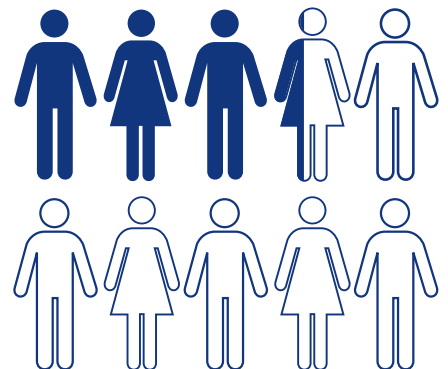
1 in 4 people die within a year of a hip fracture



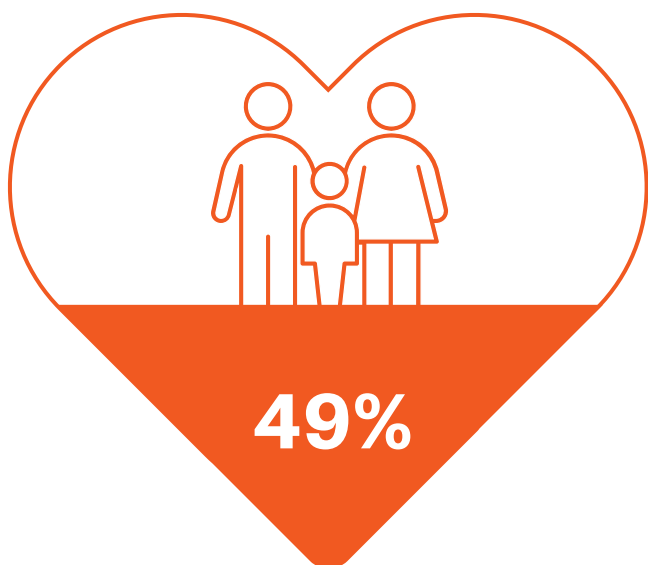
A year after a hip fracture, **80% of people** need help with activities like shopping and personal care



33% of people who have broken a bone see friends and relatives less



Personal



49% of people who have broken a bone had their physical intimacy affected. Relationships between loved ones become strained as people become more dependent on those around them. But at the same time, many people feel unable to hug the people they love for fear of breaking more bones.

Health economy

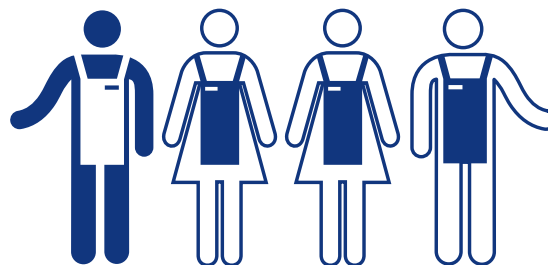
It's not just the personal cost of osteoporosis. Osteoporosis costs the NHS and social care a huge amount of money each year.

**Hip fractures alone cost the NHS
£1.1 billion per year**

Cost to society

Broken bones, or the fear of breaking a bone, can lead to people giving up work long before they had planned. This in turn can add to feelings of social isolation and depression, as well as to financial hardship.

1 in 4 people who were working at diagnosis had to give up work, change their job or reduce their work



30% find osteoporosis a financial burden

We can do things to help

We make a significant contribution to improving the quality of healthcare and treatment that people with osteoporosis receive, which in turn helps prevent further fractures. By supporting people with osteoporosis directly, we make sure they know what they can do to improve their own bone health.

However, to achieve our vision – a future without osteoporosis – we now need to work to improve everyone's bone health. We all need to know and talk about the things we can do to strengthen our bones; to maximise our peak bone mass and to minimise age-related bone loss. This way we can prevent many future cases of osteoporosis, and by working with researchers we can help develop the new treatments that one day will provide a cure for osteoporosis.

* For the story behind the statistic, visit theros.org.uk or please get in touch

5. Our strategic aims

We understand the challenges ... we've declared our mission, values and the principles behind our work ... we're now ready to state our strategic aims to achieve our vision of a future without osteoporosis.

Prevention

Everyone has the best possible bone health throughout their life

Loss of bone strength and the associated pain and disability that fractures cause is preventable in many cases. There is much that people can do to look after their bones at all ages, particularly around nutrition and physical activity. We want to maximise peak bone mass in children and prevent premature bone loss in adults, where possible preventing people from developing osteoporosis. We want to work with other organisations to promote bone health and encourage everyone to look after their bones.

This means:

- Influencing and collaborating with national and local policy makers to make the prevention of osteoporosis a priority.
- Developing clear, simple and evidence-based messages on how to achieve good bone health, working with other organisations to communicate these effectively.
- Supporting people and motivating people of all ages to take proactive steps to achieve good bone health.

“Prevention gets us talking to the next generations. Getting the message out about strengthening bones and encouraging behaviour change.”

Care

Everyone who breaks a bone or is at risk of osteoporosis is assessed and managed appropriately

Many symptoms and poor outcomes can be prevented with effective treatment and care. We continue to work towards ensuring that everyone with osteoporosis receives the good quality healthcare they need to live life well. By making services more accessible to those who need them and by improving the quality of those services, we will further decrease the number of fractures and premature deaths while reducing costs for the NHS and social care.

This means:

- Driving accurate and timely diagnosis and treatment by informing and educating healthcare professionals.
- Ensuring organisations commission, design and deliver high quality services to prevent falls and fractures, providing support where needed to achieve this.
- Supporting and influencing healthcare organisations to ensure services are provided in all areas of the UK.

“Care continues our work with service providers and healthcare professionals, to improve access to good quality treatment and services for osteoporosis.”

Support

Everyone with osteoporosis lives well and manages their condition in ways that best meet their needs

Having osteoporosis can mean living with a physical and emotional burden, and sometimes unbearable pain. Many people with the condition feel alone, afraid and helpless. We want everyone with osteoporosis to know that they can contact us for support and information that they can trust. We seek to provide a support network, connecting people to experts, local groups and a wider community of peer support, to reduce isolation and improve wellbeing.

This means:

- Helping people to understand osteoporosis, medication and lifestyle choices by providing information at the right time and in the right way.
- Providing a range of accessible one-to-one and peer support services for those with osteoporosis, personalised to meet individual needs.
- Working with other organisations to ensure people with osteoporosis have access to interventions to enable them to live well and feel supported and motivated to manage their condition.

“Support is the way we help people to live well with the condition, providing information, advice and a listening ear.”

Cure

People have fewer fractures and live well because of new interventions

The development of more effective and safe treatments and therapies to prevent broken bones and improve the quality of life for people with osteoporosis is vital to our long-term vision.

We will work with other organisations to identify the research gaps and be clear on priorities. Then we can influence and steer the research agenda, encouraging collaboration and developing osteoporosis academics, to maximise the impact of new research.

We believe that new insight and development will, over time, lead to improved outcomes for people with the symptoms of osteoporosis, **and ultimately, to a day when we can talk with confidence about a future without osteoporosis.**

This means:

- Collaborating with leading bone health researchers, industry, government and other charities to identify priorities and coordinate effort.
- Continuously learning from research and exploring new techniques to drive forward the development of new treatments and medical interventions.
- Acting as the voice of people with the condition to make sure that their priorities and concerns are central to the research process.

“Cure strengthens our involvement in research, leading and coordinating effort to bring forward the day when we have a future without osteoporosis.”

6. Our strategy at a glance

Our vision: A future without osteoporosis

OUR AIMS

	Prevention	Care	Support	Cure
Aim	Everyone has the best possible bone health throughout their life	Everyone who breaks a bone or is at risk of osteoporosis is assessed and managed appropriately	Everyone with osteoporosis is able to live well and manage their condition in ways that best meet their needs	People have fewer fractures and live well as a result of new interventions
Activity	Promoting bone health, encouraging behaviour change	Working with service providers and healthcare professionals to improve access to quality services	Providing support and information directly to people living with osteoporosis	Influence and partner with organisations to develop more effective interventions and ultimately a cure

To achieve our aims, our work is underpinned by our principles:



Summary

Few people are aware of the need to strengthen their bones to protect themselves for the future – and only a minority understand the harm caused by osteoporosis.

Through our new strategy we will change this. We are excited about the future and we embrace the changes that the coming years will bring.

We want the nation to look after its bones, appreciate the importance of bone health for everybody and for those who do develop osteoporosis – we will be there to help them live well.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of our strategy and how you can help us deliver our vision of a future without osteoporosis, then do please give us a phone call, email or contact us via the website – we'd love to hear from you.





Better bone health for everybody

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