



Marie Rimmer CBE, MP
Member of Parliament for St. Helens
South & Whiston
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 4847/01744 752075

Arthritis and Joint Replacement Surgery

There are roughly ten million people in the UK living with arthritis. However, it often goes unnoticed or ignored by individuals and wider society. I sympathise profoundly with anyone who is affected.

COVID-19 has demonstrated beyond all doubt just how important our National Health Service is. However, protecting the NHS throughout the pandemic has come at a cost, with cancelled operations and treatment delayed.

I recognise concerns that the pandemic has exacerbated the challenges facing the NHS and its ability to deliver routine care. Waiting times for elective surgery were already rising before the pandemic, with record numbers of people with arthritis waiting longer than ever for joint replacement surgery.

I remain concerned that years of NHS underfunding, cuts and understaffing weakened and exposed our health service as the pandemic hit. As a result, waiting lists for treatment now stand at a record 5.1 million, with over 385,000 patients waiting longer than a year for treatment.

Many vulnerable people living with arthritis who are waiting longer for treatment are often in pain and suffer from distress and anxiety. This runs the serious risk that their health will deteriorate further, with poorer outcomes for patients who are waiting longer than six months, when treatment is less effective.

I believe that the Government must prioritise patient care in the recovery from COVID-19. It is crucial that Ministers provide hospitals, our NHS staff, and patients with a fully resourced rescue plan to bring waiting lists down and deliver the care and treatment that people living with arthritis deserve, including timely access to joint replacement surgery.

Beyond the pandemic, I believe Ministers must guarantee the standards of healthcare patients are entitled to under the NHS Constitution. This must include a commitment that people living with arthritis can access life-changing surgery when it will make the most difference.

Marie Rimmer CBE, MP

Constituency Office:

Marie Rimmer CBE, MP, 2nd Floor, Century House, Hardshaw Street, St. Helens WA10 1QU, 01744 752075,
marie.rimmer.mp@parliament.uk
Website: www.marierimmer.co.uk