



# ORGANISE AN ARTHRITIS CHAMPIONS WALK

Get together with your Arthritis Ireland Walking Group to organise an **Arthritis Champions Walk**.

Invite your local candidates to walk with you to hear about the difficulties you have in accessing appropriate rheumatology services in your area.

Take a picture and send it to your local media with a caption and a short press release. (Use our template release overleaf. You can download a Word File of the Press Release from [www.whyarewewaiting.ie](http://www.whyarewewaiting.ie)).

## TIPS ON DEALING WITH LOCAL MEDIA

- > Compile a list of emails and phone numbers for your local news desks – newspapers and radio.
- > Keep an eye out for journalists covering issues close to the campaign.
- > Send out a notification of your **Arthritis Champions Walk** a week in advance to let media know that your event is taking place – where, when, why and who.
- > Ask your local papers to put a notice about your walk in their “What’s On” section.
- > If you are planning a photo, give information about the photocall.
- > Ring the newsrooms or your contact journalists to check if they have received the notification and to see if they can attend or send a photographer.
- > Send your press release out early on the day of your walk. Cut and paste your release into the body of your email. Don’t send the release or notification as an attachment. Make sure your subject line grabs attention and gives an indication about the issue within the release.
- > Follow up on the release with a phone-call to check that it has been seen and to ensure that it gets covered.
- > Bring copies of your press release to your event(s) for media who attend.

# TEMPLATE PRESS RELEASE



For release:                      Date Month Year

## Are [area]’s election candidates up to the #ArthritisChampion challenge?

Election candidates will today [date] join the [area] Arthritis Ireland Walking Group for an *Arthritis Champions Walk* in [where].

The event is part of **Arthritis Ireland’s 100 Day Plan** for Election 2016. It provides an opportunity for election candidates to find out more about the urgent need for better rheumatology services in [area], and the reality of living with arthritis for thousands of people in (insert area).

Nearly one million people in Ireland – one in five of us – are living with some form of arthritis. There are 12,600 people waiting in crippling pain to see a rheumatology consultant, including 455 children. [Few lines about statistics locally.]

[Area] Arthritis Ireland Walking Group is calling on each and every one of [constituency]’s election candidates to commit to **Arthritis Ireland’s 100 Day Plan** by registering as an #ArthritisChampion at [whyarewewaiting.ie](http://whyarewewaiting.ie). They are also asking the public to stand with them this election and vote for Arthritis Champions.

[Insert quote from representative of the walking group, for example...] “Every year, the HSE spends millions on the avoidable costs of undiagnosed and untreated arthritis,” said [walking group representative]. “But the pain of waiting for services is even greater. People living with chronic pain in [constituency] cannot wait any longer. We need urgent action in the first term of the next Government.”

Arthritis Ireland has a simple plan to cut waiting lists, improve treatment, end long-term disability and save the HSE millions in unnecessary costs. It is asking for a commitment, in the first 100 days of the next Government, to the appointment of 100 specialist rheumatology posts to be made as soon as possible.

[Insert quote from representative of the walking group, for example..] “We are asking for 100 rheumatology posts, the cost of which – about €7 million every year – pales in comparison to the €700 million a year arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions cost the State in lost days at work alone,” said [walking group representative].

For more information contact:

Local contact name

Local mobile number