

## Services for People with Rheumatoid Arthritis: Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, Session 2008- 2009



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## SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS: REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL, SESSION 2008-2009

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TSO. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Services for People with Rheumatoid Arthritis: Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, Session 2008-2009, National Audit Office (NAO), Approximately 580,000 adults in England currently have rheumatoid arthritis, with a further 26,000 new cases diagnosed each year. The disease costs the NHS around GBP 560 million annually and the estimated cost to the economy, in sick leave and work-related disability for people with rheumatoid arthritis, is GBP 1.8 billion a year. Conclusions and recommendations of this title include the following. The NHS does not consistently provide support for people with the disease to remain in, or get back into, work, with a lack of local links between the NHS and Jobcentre Plus services. Early diagnosis is the key to the successful treatment of rheumatoid arthritis but public awareness of the disease is low. People often delay seeking medical help from their GP, the disease is difficult to diagnose and requires specialist knowledge; and few GPs have the specialist expertise required to diagnose rheumatoid. The average length of time from symptom onset to treatment is nine months, compared to the clinically recommended period of three months, and this has not improved in the past five years. There is inconsistent coordination of the roles and activities of staff in different parts of the NHS: for example between GPs and hospital specialists. Furthermore, many patients do not have sufficient access to psychological services even though depression is common for people with rheumatoid arthritis; and the provision of quick response appointments in the event of a flare up is inconsistent. Current services also do not always match the Government's vision of a 'systematic patient-centred approach' and the majority of PCTs are not commissioning as effectively as they could as they do not know the numbers of people...

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