Because the NHS only offers limited access to some therapies after stroke, you might choose to explore the option of private treatment. This resource sheet provides information on the types of treatments available privately and lists organisations that can help you in your search for safe and reliable private treatment.

### Which treatments are available privately?

Different types of **assessments** and **treatments** for stroke are available privately. They include:

**Prevention services** – These test you for the risk factors for stroke. You may be tested for high blood pressure, high cholesterol and other health conditions such as diabetes and an irregular heartbeat (atrial fibrillation). These tests are usually available through your GP if you are at a high risk of stroke.

**Diagnosis** – A brain scan (CT or MRI scan) can confirm whether you have had a stroke. Usually you will have a scan when you are admitted to hospital with a suspected stroke. However you may have one if your doctor thinks you have had a stroke some time ago.

**Rehabilitation** – There is often a waiting list for therapies on the NHS such as speech and language therapy and counselling. In many areas they are offered for a limited period of time and many people consider private rehabilitation. Sometimes rehabilitation after stroke is called neuro-rehabilitation.

Some common therapies after a stroke are:

- **physiotherapy** – for help with mobility, muscle weakness and balance problems
- **speech and language therapy** – for help with swallowing or communication difficulties
- **occupational therapy** – for help with regaining independence in everyday activities
- **clinical psychology** – for help with cognitive problems such as memory loss or poor concentration, or for help with emotional problems such as depression, anxiety and personality changes.

### Can I have private and NHS treatment together?

**Having private treatment should not affect your right to treatment from your health service.** If you are receiving NHS treatment and extra private treatment would be beneficial, you can receive both
Private treatment

according to guidance in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In Wales you should check with your local hospital.

Your NHS and private treatments should be carried out at different times and in different places. It is helpful for all health professionals providing your care to be aware of each other, so they can make sure your treatments are consistent.

Paying for private treatment

The costs for private treatment can vary greatly depending on where you live and the type of treatment you are looking for.

Usually private treatment is paid for through a medical insurance policy or directly by the patient, which is called self-funding. Although some independent therapists are registered with insurance companies, you will usually have to pay the therapist first and claim the fees back from your insurance company.

Medical insurance policies vary so if you have one, make sure you read it carefully before you start treatment. In particular:

• check whether the costs of your treatment are covered by your policy before you arrange it

• if you have been referred by a doctor, check your insurance company accepts their authority.

What should I consider?

• Speak to your doctor first if you are considering private treatment. They can advise on whether the treatment is suitable for you. Depending on what treatment you are looking for, your doctor may also be required to make your initial referral.

• Make sure that any therapist you see is registered with the relevant professional body. (See ‘Useful organisations’ section for more information.)

• Check that any rehabilitation therapist you see has experience in stroke.

• Do some research. Where possible contact a few private therapists or hospitals near you to compare the services they offer, and their charges, before making your decision.

Useful organisations

All organisations listed are UK wide unless otherwise stated.

Stroke Association
Stroke Helpline: 0303 3033 100
Email: info@stroke.org.uk
Website: stroke.org.uk
Contact us for information about stroke, emotional support and details of local services and support groups.

Information on private hospitals

BMI Healthcare
Advice Line: 0808 101 0337
Email: info@bmihealthcare.co.uk
Website: www.bmihealthcare.co.uk
There are 70 BMI hospitals in England, Scotland and Wales. Treatments include physiotherapy and speech and language therapy.
Private treatment

**BUPA**
Tel: 0800 606 570  
Website: www.bupa.co.uk  
One of the leading providers of private health insurance and private health care services in the UK.

**Dr Foster Health**
Website: www.drfosterhealth.co.uk  
This website includes a database of private and NHS hospitals. It also includes a database of consultants, including their area of expertise, and the NHS and private hospitals where they practise. (Search under ‘brain’, ‘stroke’, and ‘rehabilitation medicine’.)

**Health and Social Care Northern Ireland Gateway**  
Website: www.n-i.nhs.uk  
Information on hospitals and private treatment in Northern Ireland.

**NHS Choices (England & Wales)**  
Website: www.nhs.uk  
On the NHS Choices website there is a search function to find services including NHS and private hospitals within a particular geographical area.

**NHS Scotland**  
Website: www.nhs24.com  
Provides information on health services in Scotland.

**Nuffield Hospitals**  
Tel: 0300 123 6200  
Website: www.nuffieldhealth.com  
An independent hospital group that provides a range of services in England and Scotland. Rehabilitation for stroke is available at their sites in Bristol, Brighton and Bournemouth.

**Private Health**
Website: www.privatehealth.co.uk  
This online resource includes a database of private hospitals, private services in NHS hospitals, and private consultants and doctors.

**Priory Group**  
Tel: 0845 277 4679  
Email: info@priorygroup.com  
Website: www.priorygroup.com  
Provides neuro-rehabilitation services at three residential centres located in Bury and East Sussex.

**Specialist Info**  
Website: www.specialistinfo.com  
An online database of NHS and private hospitals, consultants and GPs. Access to some of the site requires you to register online.

**Spire Healthcare**  
Website: www.spirehealthcare.com  
A network of independent hospitals in England, Scotland and Wales.

**Rehabilitation**

**Health Professions Council (HPC)**  
Helpline: 0845 300 4472  
Email: registration@hpc-uk.org  
Website: www.hpc-uk.org  
Independent UK-wide regulator that sets standards of professional training, conduct and performance for 15 health professions. This includes occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists, but not nurses and doctors. On their website, you can check whether a named health professional is registered. It is illegal to practise in the UK without registration.
Private treatment

Physiotherapy

**Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)**  
**Tel:** 020 7306 6666  
**Website:** www.csp.org.uk  
The professional and educational body for the UK’s chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and assistants.

**Physio First**  
**Tel:** 01604 684 960  
**Email:** minerva@physiofirst.org.uk  
**Website:** www.physiofirst.org.uk  
This is a group of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy for members in private practice. You can search online for a private physiotherapist near you.

Speech and language therapy

**Association of Speech and Language Therapists in Independent Practice (ASLTip)**  
**Tel:** 01494 488 306  
**Website:** www.helpwithtalking.com  
This website includes an advanced search function to find private speech and language therapists across the UK, including those working with stroke patients (listed under acquired brain injury) and those able to work in languages other than English. All therapists are registered with the HPC.

**Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists**  
**Tel:** 020 7378 1200  
**Website:** www.rcslt.org.uk  
The Royal College represents speech and language therapists and support workers and promotes good practice.

Occupational therapy

**British Association of Occupational Therapists and College of Occupational Therapists**  
**Tel:** 020 7357 6480  
**Website:** www.cot.co.uk  
The professional body for all occupational therapy staff in the UK.

**The College of Occupational Therapists Specialist Section – Independent Practice**  
**Enquiry line:** 0845 129 7699  
**Email:** enquiries@cotss-ip.org.uk  
**Website:** www.cotss-ip.org.uk  
Has an online directory of qualified, private occupational therapists.

Psychology and counselling

**British Psychological Society (BPS)**  
**Tel:** 0116 254 9568  
**Email:** enquiries@bps.org.uk  
**Website:** www.bps.org.uk  
The representative body for psychology and psychologists in the UK. The website has a Directory of Chartered Psychologists. You can search this for the nearest private psychologist who is qualified to carry out an assessment after stroke.

**British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)**  
**Tel:** 01455 883 300  
**Email:** bacp@bacp.co.uk  
**Website:** www.bacp.co.uk  
A professional body which registers accredited counsellors and psychotherapists, and can provide advice and information for anybody seeking counselling or therapy. Their website includes a search function to find qualified practitioners by area.
Private treatment

**COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)**
Tel: 01786 475 140
Email: info@cosca.org.uk
Website: www.cosca.org.uk
Scotland’s professional body for counselling and psychotherapy. The website directory enables you to find a qualified private therapist in most parts of Scotland.

**Residential**

**Barchester Healthcare Ltd**
Tel: 0208 242 6472
Website: www.barchester.com
Care homes throughout the UK providing 24-hour care and a range of services including neuro-rehabilitation and respite care.

**Brain Injury Rehabilitation Trust (BIRT)**
Tel: 01924 896 100
Email: director@birt.co.uk
Website: www.birt.co.uk
Runs residential rehabilitation centres and community supported houses across England, and one in Scotland. They work with people who have brain injuries including stroke. The usual age range is 18-65 years. They also have a neuro-rehabilitation centre, which is located at Goole NHS Hospital.

**Hunters Moor Neuro-rehabilitation Centre for the West Midlands**
Tel: 0121 777 9343
Email: info@huntersmoor.com
Website: www.huntersmoor.com
Provides behavioural and rehabilitation support in Birmingham and the North East.

**Leonard Cheshire Disability Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services**
Tel: 020 3242 0200
Email: nationalabi@lcdisability.org
Website: www.lcdisability.org
Support people with acquired brain injuries who are ready to leave hospital, but still need specialist rehabilitation. There are rehabilitation services in England, Scotland and Wales and living support in Northern Ireland. Also offers UK-wide short breaks, home care and leisure services.

**Queen Elizabeth’s Foundation for Disabled People**
Tel: 01737 356 222
Email: neurorehab@qef.org.uk
Website: www.qef.org.uk
Neuro-rehabilitation services focused on young adults aged 16-35.

**Strode Park Foundation**
Tel: 01227 373 292
Email: info@strodepark.org.uk
Website: www.strodepark.org.uk
Provides neuro-rehabilitation for people with neurological disabilities.

**Non-residential**

**ARCOS (Association for the Rehabilitation of Communication and Oral Skills)**
Tel: 01684 576 795
Email: admin@arcos.org.uk
Website: www.arcos.org.uk
Therapy by professionals to assist people with communication and swallowing problems. Outreach services are available.

**ARNI Trust (Action for Rehabilitation from Neurological Injury)**
Tel: 07712 211 378
Email: support@arni.uk.com
Website: www.arni.uk.com
Trains and certifies instructors, who are also qualified physical trainers, to deliver tailored...
exercise programmes throughout the UK.

**The Bobath Centre for Adults with Neurological Disability**
*Tel:* 020 8444 3355  
*Email:* enquiries@bobath.co.uk  
*Website:* www.bobath.co.uk  
Provides specialist therapy for adults with acquired neurological conditions, including stroke, and accepts referrals from consultants and GPs. In some cases the health service may fund this treatment.

**National Institute of Conductive Education**
*Tel:* 0121 442 5556  
*Website:* www.conductive-education.org.uk  
Conductive Education (CE) is an educational system developed for people who have problems with movement because of a neurological condition such as stroke.

**Sight Science Limited**
*Tel:* 07842 106 131  
*Email:* info@sightscience.com  
*Website:* www.sightscience.com  
Sight Science provides Neuro-eye Therapy (NeET), an interactive computer programme which can improve visual sensitivity for some people with visual field loss.

**Information sources**

**Ask financially**
*Tel:* 0289 581 0267  
*Email:* askfinancially@googlemail.com  
*Website:* www.askfinancially.com  
Consumer information website, including a health insurance guide.

**Association of British Insurers (ABI)**
*Website:* www.abi.org.uk/information  
Represents the UK’s insurance industry.

Provides independent information for consumers on all aspects of insurance including health insurance.

**British Brain & Spine Foundation**
*Helpline:* 0808 808 1000  
*Website:* www.brainandspine.org.uk  
Offers general information on brain and spine conditions, and a helpline staffed by neurology nurses. You can find your nearest neurological centre by clicking on their online map.

**Citizens Advice**
*Website:* www.adviceguide.org.uk  
Provides a factsheet on private medical treatment.

**Headway**
*Helpline:* 0808 800 2244  
*Website:* www.headway.org.uk  
Headway supports people with brain injuries. They have local groups, a helpline and a range of useful publications. Maintains a directory of brain injury resources in the NHS and private residential sector.

**UK Acquired Brain Injury Forum (UKABIF)**
*Tel:* 0845 608 0788  
*Email:* info@btconnect.com  
*Website:* www.ukabif.org.uk  
A coalition of organisations and individuals that aims to provide information and advice to policy makers, service providers and the public. Has local forums, and a website directory of NHS and private rehabilitation facilities is being developed.

**Disclaimer:** The Stroke Association provides the details of other organisations for information only. Inclusion in this resource sheet does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement.
You can make a difference in a matter of seconds. Text ‘Stroke’ to 70007 to make a donation of £5 and support our vital work today. Texts cost £5 plus your standard network rate of which a minimum £4.70 will go to The Stroke Association. Full terms and conditions at www.stroke.org.uk/textterms

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