

# Club Together

Issue 49: Winter 2018

Central



William had a stroke in 2015, while getting ready for work. His partner found him on the floor and noticed his **fallen face** and **slurred speech**. Remembering the **FAST test**, she rang **999** immediately.

William has permanent brain tissue damage and has psychological, emotional and cognitive difficulties as a result of his stroke.

However, he has since completed more than **70 Parkruns** and the **Berlin Marathon** for our charity.

**'I was so lucky to be found so quickly and treated so quickly, that someone had recognized the FAST signs and had the foresight to call 999.'**

**Would your family and friends know how to do the FAST test?**

**Face:** look at the person's face and ask them to smile. Has their face fallen on one side?

**Arms:** ask the person to raise both of their arms and keep them there. Are they unable to raise one arm?

**Speech:** ask the person to tell you their name, or say 'hello'. Is their speech slurred?

**Time:** it's time to call 999 if you spot any of the above signs.

Help us make more people FAST aware. Share **FAST cards** in your **community** and with your **family and friends**.

**Learn it. Share it. You could save a life.** Find out more about the FAST test and other signs of stroke at [stroke.org.uk/FAST](http://stroke.org.uk/FAST).

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**Together we can conquer stroke**

**Stroke**  
association

# Find out about our support restructure

Our **volunteering teams** across the UK have **recently undergone a change** in the way they are **structured**. We hope that these changes ensure that you know who to go to for **support in your area**.

All of our teams have been through a period of transition and recruitment in order to make sure we have the **right people in the right roles** in each area.

As part of this restructure, we've **divided England into three zones**, but our **countries boundaries remain the same**.

The teams across our England zones and countries will consist of the following roles:

- **Head of Volunteering and Community**
- **Volunteering and Community Manager** (in some areas)
- **Volunteering Coordinator**
- **Volunteering and Community Officers**

We've also renamed our **Life After Stroke Services directorate to Stroke Support**, and we have a key focus and responsibility for supporting volunteering activity across the UK. We're sure you'll meet our new staff along the way; please do give them a warm welcome!

As a result of these changes, **Club Together has also restructured**.

We now have issues for the following zones and countries:

- **England – North**
- **England – Central**
- **England – South**
- **Wales**
- **Scotland & NI**

This has been done to make sure the news from clubs and groups across our **zones and countries** still gets **shared** and **celebrated**.

# Inspired ideas

Although you probably know your fellow club and group members quite well, you'd be surprised what you can learn when you have the opportunity to really focus on each other.

The following game allows you to do just that, and all you need is a bag of coloured sweets, or if you're being healthy, a bag of coloured beads. You'll need enough for a **few goes each**.

First, sit **in a circle** so that you can see each other. Then, **pass the bag around** the circle. As it goes round, each member should pick a sweet or bead from the bag and **say something about themselves** depending on the colour drawn. Below are some suggestions for what you can say for each colour:

### **Red: something about yesterday**

It could be something you saw or did, read or organised – anything that comes to mind.

### **Orange: something you do well**

We all have different skills and talents, let the group know one of yours.

### **Yellow: something you can't live without**

This could be something you love eating or doing, or perhaps something that makes your day-to-day life that little bit easier.

### **Blue: something you learned last week**

There's an abundance of new information coming at us daily - what did you find interesting?

### **Purple: something about your childhood**

Is there something your group would be surprised to know from your early years, or did you have an interesting hobby that shaped your childhood?

### **Green: something you watch or listen to**

Someone might take your recommendation and find their new favourite book, TV show, radio play or podcast.

This game is a great way to encourage people in the club or group to talk about themselves.

## Essential Aids



A stroke can lead to a multitude of new **everyday challenges**. Getting dressed, preparing a meal or even taking a bath can present previously unforeseen problems. That's where our shopping partner, **Essential Aids**, can help out.

Their website has a **big range of products** designed to **assist you** in all sorts of tasks around the home.

There are **grab rails** and **walking aids**, plus equipment to help with **food preparation**, **bathing** and **getting dressed**.

Essential Aids also supplies **easy-exercise rehab** products that can help **improve muscle strength** and **coordination**.

Visit [essentialaids.com/stroke-association](http://essentialaids.com/stroke-association) or call **01273 719 889** for a catalogue.

If the item you're buying is for a stroke survivor, please **tick the box at the checkout** and Essential Aids will donate **5% of the item price** to us.

Visit [stroke.org.uk/daily-living-aids](http://stroke.org.uk/daily-living-aids), [essentialaids.com](http://essentialaids.com) or phone Essential Aids on **01273 719 889** for more ideas and information about aids around the home.

## More news on our national plan for stroke

We are thrilled to share the good news that the **Government has committed to a new national plan for stroke**, and **NHS England** will continue to support its development.

As we've said before, this is a direct result of your support. From **signing petitions**, **contacting local politicians** and **sharing your experiences**, we couldn't have done it without you.

In November, **Sir Bruce Keogh**, the previous National Medical Director at NHS England, **publicly stated his support** for a new national plan for stroke.

And then in December, the Government announced their response. **Lord O'Shaughnessy**, stood up in the **House of Lords** and said: "**On the stroke strategy, there is a follow on plan being developed by NHS England and partners, including the Stroke Association and others, which will take forward that approach.**"

"**It is an integrated service approach, so it is including ambulance, community as well as secondary care.**"

This is a great campaign victory. We continue to work with NHS England to write our plan, and we hope it will bring **key organisations together** to improve **stroke care and treatment**. We hope that it will be published soon.

We will update you again when the details of the plan are refined and put into action, and we'll let you know how you can help with the next stage of our **A New Era For Stroke** campaign.





All over the UK, there are people who show **amazing courage, determination and compassion** on a daily basis, in an effort to overcome the **debilitating effects** of stroke. We want you to **help us find them**.

Do you know someone affected by stroke who's an inspiration? Nominate them for a **Life After Stroke Award** and give them the recognition they deserve. Whether they're a **stroke survivor, carer, professional or volunteer**, let them know just how remarkable they are. You can nominate them for an award in these categories:

- **Award for Volunteering**
- **Stroke Group Award**
- **Carer's Award**
- **Courage Awards:**
  - Children and Young People's Courage Award
  - Adult Courage Award 18-64
  - Adult Courage Award 65 years and over
- **Award for Creative Arts**
- **Professional Excellence Award**
- **Fundraiser of the Year Award**

You can nominate online at [stroke.org.uk/LASA](http://stroke.org.uk/LASA), or request a nomination form in the post by emailing [lasa@stroke.org.uk](mailto:lasa@stroke.org.uk) or by calling **01527 903 927**.

Did you know that if you've nominated someone in a previous year but they didn't win, you can **nominate them again**, year-on-year?

## Wales' Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group's 2017 win

The group were presented with the **Stroke Group Award** at The Dorchester Hotel in London on 1 November, by **The One Show** Welsh presenter, **Alex Jones**, and star of **Cold Feet**, actor, **Robert Bathurst**.

The group were recognised for **providing much needed long-term support** to stroke survivors in South Wales. They're a **welcoming and vibrant** group, who organise all sorts of exciting activities together - from **African drumming** to a **trip to Ibiza** - and are committed to **raising money and awareness of stroke**. They said: **"It was an incredible event, we were spoilt rotten. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves."**

If you think your club or group is a worthy winner, why not **nominate them** for a Life After Stroke Award this year? Head to [stroke.org.uk/LASA](http://stroke.org.uk/LASA).





## There's still time to join a Resolution Run

Our runs continue into April, so there's still time to join us across the UK as hundreds of supporters take to local venues to be part of our **Resolution Runs**.

Our runs are designed to be fun and suitable for **all ages and abilities**. Whether you **run or walk**, our Resolution Runs are not only **enjoyable for all** but **raise much-needed funds**.

Each run has a minimum length of **5km** with some venues offering **10** and **15km** routes.

Each participant receives a **T-shirt, water, training emails** and a **medal** for taking part.

Why not encourage **friends, family** or **members from your group** to come and take on the challenge by **taking part**, or by **helping as a volunteer** on the day?

If you can't attend one of our scheduled events, you can still take part by joining our **Virtual Resolution Run**.

To find out more about your nearest Resolution Run and our Virtual Resolution Runs, please visit [stroke.org.uk/resolutionrun](http://stroke.org.uk/resolutionrun).

You can also call **0300 330 0740** or get in touch with your **local fundraising team**.

## Join us at a UKSA

Our **UK Stroke Assembly** events are the largest gatherings of stroke survivors in the UK. We bring together people affected by stroke to **have their say, share experiences** and hear the latest developments in **stroke care and research**.

Going to a UK Stroke Assembly event is a great opportunity to **meet others** in a similar situation and **learn from them**, be **inspired** and **gain encouragement**. Many people make great personal achievements in attending.

Together with members from his stroke group in Plymouth, **Darren Hall** attended our UK Stroke Assembly South event.

**"We found the UK Stroke Assembly very informative and very enjoyable. All the stroke survivors were so inspirational. We also had a chance to meet Stroke Association staff throughout the region. The amount of work that is happening right now and is planned for the future is phenomenal."**

### Why not join us at an event in 2018?

#### UK Stroke Assembly North

Monday 4 to Tuesday 5 June at Radisson Blu Hotel, Manchester Airport

#### UK Stroke Assembly South

Monday 9 to Tuesday 10 July at Radisson Blu Hotel, Stansted Airport

For more information and to book your place, visit [stroke.org.uk/UKSA](http://stroke.org.uk/UKSA) or call **01527 903917**.



# Sign up to our online support tool

Stroke can change lives in an instant. Whether it's happened to you or someone close to you, **My Stroke Guide** can help.

My Stroke Guide's trusted online support is all in one place, **whenever you need it**, to guide you through your stroke journey.

Easy-to-read **information, advice** and **videos** from the Stroke Association explain everything you need to know after a stroke. And our chat forum can connect you to our **online community**, to find out how others manage their recovery.

Log on to **mystrokeguide.com** today.

**"The video concept is fantastic.**

**I wish I had that when I had my stroke.**

**I felt like I always had to ask questions."**

**Tina Hughes**, our Peer Support Development Officer and previous My Stroke Guide Coordinator, met **Prakash Kotecha**, from East Leicestershire, at **4Wards Stroke Leicester** group.

Tina presented My Stroke Guide to the entire group. As a result Prakash, with help from Tina, decided to buy a tablet to use My Stroke Guide. Prakash said:

**"It has let me talk to other people that have had a stroke. I eventually want to set up a group for people who want to go on holiday and share a carer. I enjoy watching the videos of other people that have had a stroke. It helps me to realise I'm not on my own."**



**My Stroke Guide user, Mohamed Komara**

As **My Stroke Guide** has grown into a trusted online community and support tool, we **closed our online forum, TalkStroke, on 5 February.**

You can keep the conversation alive in a **supportive and welcoming** community on My Stroke Guide. Registering is quick, easy and takes no longer than five minutes.

We'd like to **thank you** for all your commitment to TalkStroke and we hope you join us soon on My Stroke Guide.

If you have any questions, please call us on **0300 222 5707** or email us at **mystrokeguide@stroke.org.uk.**

## Get your groove on for stroke



Thanks to the generous support of local Bury St Edmunds Zumba instructor, **Alex Beale**, and members of her regular Zumba class, the **Second Chance Stroke Group** held a charity Zumba class at the **British Sugar Sports and Social Club** in October.

The event raised **much-needed funds** to help meet the group's varied activities and running costs. Other **fundraising activities** were held on the day, including a raffle, tombola and cake stall.

The event was very well attended by impressively energetic regular **Zumba class members** together with **group members, volunteers** and **family members**.

## Stowmarket group celebrate a decade of supporting stroke

This year sees our **Stowmarket Support Group** celebrate an incredible ten years as a Stroke Association Voluntary Group.

With around 30 members, the group meets once a week and provides **peer and social support**, as well as a wide variety of **recreational activities**.

To celebrate their birthday, they will be having a party and a cake stall on 19 May.

**We wish Stowmarket Support Group a very happy birthday!**

## Persimmon charity grants

**Persimmon Homes** run their **Community Champions** programme, which gives away grants of **up to £1000** to local **community groups** and **charities**.

So far, the hugely successful programme has already donated more than **£1 million** to good causes in England, Wales and Scotland.

**Every month** they give away **60 donations** to local groups and charities. You can find out more here [persimmonhomes.com/charity](http://persimmonhomes.com/charity).

## Chesterfield group show their Christmas creativity

**Chesterfield Stroke Group** have been meeting for the last two years and have enjoyed all sorts of talks and activities.

Last year, the volunteering team asked if the group would like to enter a **Christmas tree competition** at their local **Spire Church**, which is located in Chesterfield and quite famous for its crooked spire. So, during November and December, the group got creative and **set about making decorations** for the tree.

It was a great way to **raise the profile** of both the group and the Stroke Association locally. Sadly, in the period leading up to Christmas, they lost a



**wonderful and valued member** of their group and decided that they would **design a star in memory of him** to add to the tree. Having done this, the tree **went on display** in the church for all to see, and loved ones to take comfort.

# Health and wellbeing at the centre of West Norfolk hub and spoke group

The **West Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Group** was set up to incorporate **existing service groups and activities** so that they are able to **continue long-term, be self-financing** and **are supported by volunteers**.

The group was originally set up in 2015, but has **received so much interest** and grown that it has now split and follows the recently introduced **hub and spoke model**.

This means that there is one group with three spokes to choose from, which are **tai chi, hydrotherapy** and **the arts**.

There also plans have **music and singing sessions** too.

The group have been lucky enough to get a grant of **£5000** that secures **a years worth** of activities that the group would not have had the finances to do otherwise.

With the **wonderful work** of our volunteers, **further funds** will be gained so these activities can continue and expand.

**Well done to all involved!**



## A welcome to our new Earlsdon Stroke Support Group

We have recently welcomed a new voluntary group to our Central Zone, the **Earlsdon Stroke Support Group**. The group are based in **Coventry** and have been running since December 2017.

**John Wilkin**, the group's Chairperson, has **worked hard** and joined up those who **felt there was a need** for a group in the area.

The group already has **over 15 members** and a full volunteer team, including a full committee and group volunteers, who are **working together** to ensure that the group continues as positively as it's started. The members and volunteers are enthusiastic and keen to **offer support to local stroke survivors and their families**. The group **meet every fortnight** and we look forward to finding out what they get up to.

## Life After Stroke Awards celebration event



Nominees from **East Anglia** gathered to watch the screening of the Life After Stroke Awards and collect their certificates, shown above.

## The Active Stroke Survivors Group's hub and spoke model



The recently formed **Active Stroke Survivors Group** from the West Midlands highly recommends a day out to **Worcester's iconic Cathedral**.

This group is a **hub and spoke** group with the **Young Stroke Survivors Action Group**.

To find out more about becoming a **hub and spoke group**, please contact your local **Volunteering and Community Officer**.

## Tea, trains and pumpkin-tastic times on our group day out

Our **Stroke & Heart Survivors & Carers Support Group** have been busy indeed. Group member, **Wendy Smith** said, "Our support group went for afternoon tea at **Chasewater Railway Sidings on 21 September**.



It was a lovely occasion and the staff were great, playing some 40's music for us while we ate. They even opened the train sheds, museum, model railway and shop for us, which was very thoughtful and the group had a lovely and happy relaxed time."

The group also take part in lots of community fundraising such as guess the pumpkin size, which is usually huge. This year it came in at a whopping **177lb!**



Do you have a picture or an article that you would like featured in the next edition of Club Together?

Please contact your local Volunteering and Community Officer to find out more, they are happy to help.

# Introducing our new Central Zone team

Our new **Volunteering and Community teams** are responsible for delivering and ensuring **good practice** in the delivery of all activities relating to **volunteering or community development** across a zone or country.

Some of this activity previously took place through the old Community Development and Partnerships teams or through Area Managers. The volunteering element is new, although some activities were being undertaken by different roles in different regions and countries.

Our new **Volunteering and Community Officers** will provide a **strong link with and support to local Stroke Ambassadors, Stroke Association Voluntary Groups and Independent Affiliated Stroke Clubs** in our Central zone. They will help to build upon a network of **local stroke communities** by providing **local support and regular communications**, and by ensuring **national frameworks** are embedded.



Hi, I'm **Stuart Cooper**, Head of Volunteering and Community in our Central Zone. I've been working at the Stroke Association for seven years, as a Regional Information Officer and then Community Development and Partnerships Manager. I'm really excited to see such a commitment by our charity to supporting voluntary groups, Speakability groups and independent stroke clubs. I look forward to ensuring our volunteers receive the best support and training possible to enable them to support more stroke survivors and carers.



Hi there, I'm **Sophia Costa**, the new Volunteering Coordinator for Central England. I previously worked as a Stroke Association Support Coordinator and am looking forward to this new challenge. In this exciting new role, I'll be supporting our staff and volunteers to make sure volunteering is positive and effective. I will also be responsible for volunteer engagement, which ensures that volunteers are at the heart of all that we do.



My name's **Jodie Drust** and I'm your Officer covering **Birmingham, Solihull, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Stoke and Crewe**. I've been with our charity for nine years. I started out in the Fundraising team and moved to Community Development and Partnerships three years ago. I like meeting stroke survivors, their families and our dedicated volunteers. I hope to continue to support local groups and improve the areas where we have no services, and improve the links between stroke survivors and groups in their area. I also work with BAME groups and am keen to grow our relationship with them, reaching the communities that are most at risk of stroke and providing them with information and support.



Hi, I'm **Lorna Gough**, your Officer covering the **Suffolk, Norfolk** and **Cambridgeshire** area. I previously worked for a local charity. My role included volunteer coordinating and ensuring that staff, volunteers and service users had the best experience possible. I hope to bring my experience to our charity, to ensure that community groups go from strength-to-strength and support even more people living with stroke. I'm looking forward to getting out and about and meeting all the wonderful people who give up their time volunteering to help others and inspire people whose lives have changed following stroke.



Hi, I'm **Maria DeGiorgio** and I'm your Officer for the **Rutland, Northampton, Bedford** and **Hertford** area. I've been working in the field of stroke for 13 years and have held four positions in our charity. I began in Central London where I worked for the Director of Community Services, and my last eight years have been devoted to supporting people in the community, which has been the most humbling and fulfilling part of my career. I have a lot of experience setting up and supporting new clubs and groups, delivering volunteer training and developing new initiatives and projects. I've organized events to celebrate the great work you do and conferences where we can all come together and learn from each other.



Hi, I'm **Angela Lea**, Officer for **Herefordshire, Shropshire** and **Worcestershire**. I have over 20 years' experience of working in the voluntary sector and I previously worked for the Motor Neurone Disease Association. I am delighted to be joining the charity at this exciting time of change, and I'm looking forward to working with our club and group members and volunteers to help develop services for stroke survivors and expand our reach across the country.

Our Volunteering and Community Team have also appointed **Joanne Drake**, who is due to start soon. Joanne will be the Officer for the **Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire** and **Lincolnshire** area, and we look forward to welcoming her.

We are currently recruiting for a **Volunteering & Community Officer** to cover our **Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire** and **Oxford** area. We'll keep you updated, so watch this space!

## Regional News

### Contacts

#### Contact us by email:

clubtogether@stroke.org.uk

#### Contact us in the region:

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Life After Stroke Centre  
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**Tel: 01527 903903**

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#### Fundraising in Central Zone: West Midlands

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#### South West

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#### South Central

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#### South East

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#### East Midlands

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#### Contact us nationally:

Claire Riley  
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**Tel: 020 7566 0323**

claire.riley@stroke.org.uk

## Calendar

### Dates for your diary...

#### Saturday 3 March

Resolution Run 5/10/15k  
Trentham Gardens,  
Stoke-On-Trent

#### Sunday 11 March

Resolution Run 5/10/15k  
Braunstone Park, Leicester

#### Sunday 18 March

Resolution Run 5/10k  
Milton Park, Cambridge

#### Sunday 22 April

Resolution Run 5/10/15k  
Hagley Hall, Stourbridge

#### Saturday 19 May

Step Out for Stroke  
Sandringham Estate, Norfolk

#### Saturday 9 June

Step Out for Stroke  
Bedford Park, Bedford

#### Saturday 14 July

Step Out for Stroke  
Cassiobury Park, Watford

#### Saturday 28 July

Step Out for Stroke  
Abbey Gardens,  
Bury St Edmunds

**Stroke Helpline: 0303 3033 100**  
**stroke.org.uk**

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association