A New Era for Stroke

Right now, the Government is not listening to stroke survivors.

Too many people affected by stroke aren’t getting the support they need, and the level of care received depends on where you live.

The current national stroke strategy is due to expire in December 2017 and despite the need for further improvements in stroke care, the Government have said they have no plans to renew it.

Help us create a new era for stroke. Sign our petition calling on the government to commit to a new national stroke strategy.

"After 6 months [the doctors and nurses] decided I did not need further support [which] left me feeling as if an 'umbilical cord' had been cut."

The more signatures the petition receives, the more likely the Government is to respond. You can help ensure a response by:

1. Signing the petition online at stroke.org.uk/newera or on the enclosed petition.

2. Collecting signatures from all group volunteers, members, friends and family. Photocopy the blank petition if you think you can get even more.

3. Sharing the petition online using the link stroke.org.uk/newera

Thank you all for supporting this campaign and helping to make sure stroke gets the recognition it deserves. We could not do it without you.
**National News**

**The most purple May yet**

May 2016 saw the most successful Make May Purple campaign yet - a BIG thank you to everyone who got involved.

Find out more about how your region got involved on pages 6 and 7. And be sure to keep an eye out in the next edition of Club Together for our announcement of the winners of this year’s club/group photo competition and digital camera.

**Products which can help after a stroke**

The Stroke Association has partnered with the company Essential Aids, which offers a range of products that can help make daily tasks after a stroke easier.

The essentialaids.com website includes an array of useful items including a kitchen station, which can help to prepare food with one hand, cushions developed by occupational therapists to reduce swelling and improve shoulder alignment and leisure items such as easy grip gardening tools.

For more new ideas, go to stroke.org.uk/daily-living-aids, visit essentialaids.com or phone Essential Aids on 01273 719 889.

If you are buying as a stroke survivor or on their behalf, tick the box at the checkout and Essential Aids will donate 5% of the item price to the Stroke Association.
A royal honour

Speakeasy, an affiliated group from Lancashire that supports people affected by aphasia has been honoured with the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

Speakeasy is a North West charity offering a wide range of activities for people and the families and carers of people with communication problems. Speech and Language therapists run weekly sessions and projects, making sure the work is carefully designed to help each member develop their own pattern of support for improving communication, skills, and confidence to re-engage with life activities.

Gill Pearl, Chief Executive of Speakeasy and Stephanie Holland, who started the charity 31 years ago attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace on 24 May 2016, where they met the Queen and other winners of this year’s award. They will receive the award from Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester on 4 July 2016.

Gill Pearl was delighted to receive the news of the award. “We are thrilled to receive such a prestigious award. We are often overlooked as we are a highly specialised charity working with a disability that few people have heard of. We are so honoured that our work has been recognised in this way.”

We would like to pass on a huge congratulations from everyone here at the Stroke Association. It is a well deserved award and we are thrilled for everyone involved with Speakeasy.

Spreading awareness of aphasia

Speakability and other voluntary groups across the UK have gotten behind Aphasia Awareness Month in June by sharing Ask.Wait.Listen postcards with shops and retailers in their local area.

Feeling able to buy your groceries from your local shop or access your bank account is crucial to thousands of people affected by aphasia. Ask. Wait.Listen postcards provide tips on how staff can better communicate with customers who have aphasia with the aim of reducing communication barriers and improving the shopping experience of people with aphasia.

A big thank you to all groups who have shared these postcards in their local community. If you think shops in your area may benefit from this information, you can still order postcards and support the campaign by heading to stroke.org.uk/aphasia

Right: Roy Fish from Bradford Speakability Group shares the Ask.Wait.Listen postcards in his area.
National News

Reaching more people affected by stroke and aphasia

Are there any links between stroke and dementia? What are the long terms effects of being a carer? Is there any research into stroke and fatigue? These are just some of the questions raised and discussed by over 120 stroke survivors and carers at the UK Stroke Assembly North, held in Nottingham on Monday 13-Tuesday 14 June.

The lively event was opened with emotional talks from Rik Thornton, Tess Lancashire, Pamela Bateman-Lee and Julie Monk, all stroke survivors or carers who shared their own personal experiences of life after stroke, giving hope and inspiration to others.

Further talks and workshops lead by eminent figures in the world of stroke focused on social isolation, the benefits system, communication difficulties and the re-organisation of stroke services; with a chance for individuals to have their say and share their own experiences in all sessions.

There were also opportunities to try something new with activities like art therapy, Nordic Walking and hand massage and to find out about products and services to help in life after stroke.

"I have learnt that stroke survivors may have different problems, but we’re all in the same boat".

Now in its 6th year, the UK Stroke Assembly is an opportunity for people affected by stroke to have their say on matters important to them, and to speak directly to stroke charities and decision makers working at the forefront of stroke research, services and aphasia. The UK Stroke Assembly events are also a chance to meet others in the same situation, gain reassurance, learn something new and take action on stroke.

Jon Barrick, Stroke Association CEO at the time of the Assembly, closed the event saying, "Nothing happens unless you’re prepared to hope and keep on going". He encouraged everyone to sign the petition to fight for a New Era for Stroke, adding, "Together we can conquer stroke".

The UK Stroke Assembly 2016 will be repeated in the South on 7-8 July in Swindon. The first regional Stroke Assembly was also held in Stirling Scotland in March this year, reaching out to over 60 people affected by stroke and aphasia. This was the first event of its kind in Scotland, uniting the Scottish stroke community with inspiration, hope and shared developments in stroke care and research.

For updates about all the events and copies of the presentations from the informative and motivating talks head to www.strokeassembly.org.uk
UK Stroke Club Conference

This year’s UK Stroke Club Conference will be held on Friday 30 September - Saturday 1 October 2016, at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham.

Invites will be posted to the main contacts of all stroke clubs and groups throughout July. Space is limited so book your place early.

This annual event brings together those involved in running and volunteering at stroke clubs and groups across the UK, where delegates can network with like-minded people and hear the latest from the stroke community.

To gain new ideas for group activities and find out about support available to their members, Trevor and Jackie Hathaway of Burton-on-Trent Speakability Group joined over 170 club and group representatives at the 2015 UK Stroke Club Conference.

"We heard a very good talk about people with aphasia, and doing the practical exercises has been very useful."

"The thing about any club is keeping the momentum going. If we do repetitive things, people will lose interest and we will lose our members. There is life for people who’ve had a stroke, and it’s an enjoyable life too."

Visit www.stroke.org.uk/UKSCC to find out more about how attending the event can enhance and inspire your group.

Connect with other stroke groups online

One of the main things delegates appreciate about the UK Stroke Club Conference is the opportunity to meet and network with other stroke groups. Many of you have expressed the desire to be able to connect with each other more often, which is why we are thrilled that you can now do this using the new online discussion forums.

Using your volunteer intranet account, you can access these discussion forums by logging into the intranet and clicking into the 'People' menu item. You can then click on the 'Discussion Forums' link.

Here, you are able to respond to topics posted by other stroke group volunteers, or post your own. They are a great space to find other stroke groups in your area, ask advice, or share what you and your group have been up to.

If you have not yet received your intranet account details, please email clubtogether@stroke.org.uk.
Regional News

London goes purple for stroke

Many of our clubs and groups were also marking the month in their own way. Croydon Stroke Support Group crafted their own purple headwear, led by Mearline (below left).

Haringey West Stroke Club baked purple, making cupcakes and donning similarly stylish headwear (above).

Greenwich Stroke Club continued the cake theme, crafting wonderfully decorated purple cakes (below right).

A big thank you to everyone who helped raise awareness of stroke during May - we hugely appreciate your efforts, energy and enthusiasm. Here’s to an even better Make May Purple 2017!

A message from John McGlone

Volunteers week has been and gone, but I wanted to take the opportunity to thank all club and group volunteers out there for the incredibly hard work you put into making your groups happen.

A reminder too that I am here for any help and support you may need, such as sharing resources with you, training opportunities, support with fundraising and more. All the best to you all!
**Regional News**

**Clubs and groups out and about**

**Step out for Stroke**

We held two *Step Out for Stroke* events in London. One in Valentine’s Park, Ilford and another in Avery Hill, Eltham.

Both days were really successful, with members of London clubs and groups attending both, including members of *Waltham Forest Music & Rhythm Group* (above).

A big thank you to everyone who took part.

**Kew beauty**

*Lewisham Stroke Club* had a fantastic day out in Kew Gardens and were fortunate enough to have beautiful weather for the occasion, enjoying Kew's idyllic surroundings at their very best.

**Sidcup Speakability at the races**

*Sidcup Speakability Group* had a wonderful trip out to the Brands Hatch race circuit.

The group had exclusive use of the track and four race cars, each with a professional driver, to take willing participants around the track.

Given the option of taking laps at either a slow or fast speed, most channeled their inner Lewis Hamilton and chose the fast option!

**Connaught by the sea**

*Connaught Stroke Club* had a great day out by the sea in Southend, with everyone enjoying lunch and some fine weather.

To get the latest Stroke Association London news, follow us on Twitter via @StrokeAssocLDN

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Regional News

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Voices in Partnership

Your stroke club or group is a vital part of the community providing essential support to people affected by stroke and aphasia.

Your views and opinions are important, which is why we want to ensure your voice is being heard.

Voices in Partnership is a group made up of those involved in stroke clubs and groups. It provides a platform for clubs and groups to ensure their voice is being heard.

You can choose how we communicate with each other, and the group is flexible so you engage with only the topics you find interesting and important.

Make sure your group's voice is heard. Join Voices in Partnership.

For more information email clubtogether@stroke.org.uk or call 0207 566 0323.

Interested in joining Aphasia Voices? Email aphasiavoices@stroke.org.uk

Calendar

Dates for your diary...

August 2016
New Era for Stroke petitions to be returned

30 September - 1 October 2016
UK Stroke Club Conference
East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham

7 October 2016
Bucket collection
London Bridge Station

14 October 2016
Bucket collection
Barking & Dagenham Tesco

26 October 2016
Bucket collection
Canary Wharf

For more information on upcoming events and activities, please contact John McGlone.

To help us at one of the fundraising events above, please contact our fundraising team.

Join our stroke community on Facebook and Twitter