

StrokeNews



SPRING 2017

For everyone affected by stroke

Stepping out with a smile

Young stroke survivor, Ollie, steps out for stroke

Make May Purple

Find out how you can get involved

Blooming marvellous

Getting back out in the garden after stroke

Take a moment...

To get your blood pressure checked

stroke.org.uk

Stroke
association

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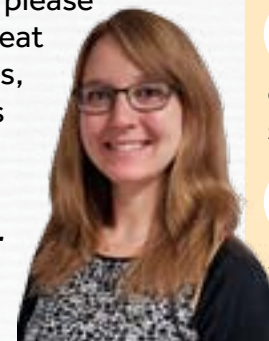
Welcome...

Spring is the perfect time to get out and about with friends and family, set goals and meet new people. In this issue, we have lots of ideas for getting active and building confidence that are great for all ages and abilities. On page 6, six-year-old stroke survivor Ollie Shearan and his mum Nicola, look forward to participating in Step Out for Stroke, while on page 26 70-year-old Robin Cant shares his success in the Thames Bridges Bike Ride.

For Stacey Hutton, it was joining the fundraising aces at the Young Women After Stroke Group in Northern Ireland that helped her to regain her confidence after stroke (page 18). Plus, find out how you can use gardening activities to aid recovery on page 28.

If you have similar experiences you'd like to share, please get in touch; it's great to hear your stories, recommendations and feedback.

Christine Webster
Editor



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Making your voices heard

Find out how you can take action and increase parliamentary support for our A New Era for Stroke campaign.

We're the leading stroke charity in the UK. We're here for you:



Stroke Helpline

Call confidentially
on **0303 3033 100**



Life After Stroke

Services Find support
in your area at **stroke.org.uk/
local-support**



Clubs and groups

provide a lifeline.
See **stroke.org.uk/clubs**



Free factsheets

guide you through all aspects
of stroke. See **stroke.org.uk/
shop**



Financial help

through
Life After Stroke Grants.
See **stroke.org.uk/grants**

Over to you



I had my stroke at 60. I couldn't speak or move my right arm and leg. It would've been easy to give up but I was determined to recover as much as possible. In hospital, I tried to be independent. While in bed, I exercised my right arm by picking it up with my left hand and raising it above my head.

When I left hospital, I found the walking stick they'd given me unsatisfactory, so I purchased a walking pole. Extended fully it reaches the ground in all circumstances but can be telescoped when indoors. It's up to you to devise your own plan of action and stick to it.



Barry Grundon

Reading about aphasia (winter 2016) reminded me of my dad, who had a stroke at 49 in 1963. He lived until his 70s but never spoke again. I wonder how different his post-stroke treatment would be today. I expect he would've had a better quality of life.



Nick Wisbey

Thanks Nick. More people than ever are benefiting from cutting-edge treatments and making good recoveries. But there's still more to do, as we discuss on page 22. Editor

Do you have something to share?



Write to us at **Stroke News**, Stroke Association House, 240 City Road, London, EC1V 2PR or email strokenews@stroke.org.uk

From our Chief Executive

There are over 100,000 strokes a year in the UK and almost two thirds of stroke survivors leave hospital with a disability. Yet stroke is not given the attention it needs, and too many stroke survivors struggle without long-term support.

We're working to push stroke up the political agenda, to ensure that survivors get the care they need. Thanks to your support, our petition for a national stroke strategy for England gained 55,500 signatures and support from MPs and Lords.

Prime Minister Theresa May recently spoke about stroke during Prime Minister's Questions. While I'm pleased she said she wants to build on the success of the current stroke strategy, I'm disappointed that the strategy's future wasn't addressed. That's why we need your help. Please contact your MP asking them to call for a plan to ensure stroke survivors get the care they need.

The FAST campaign is also keeping stroke on the national radar. Recognising stroke's symptoms and calling 999 quickly significantly increases the chance of surviving a stroke and making a better recovery. By learning and sharing the FAST test, you could save lives.

Your commitment to fundraising is always humbling. Whether you're dressing up for Make May Purple or participating in a Resolution Run, you're making a real difference to the lives of those affected by stroke.

Juliet Bouverie



Stepping out

Ollie Shearan was only three when he had a devastating stroke. Two years later, the 'cheeky' six-year-old is making remarkable progress, and is inspiring his friends and family to raise money and awareness by taking part in Step Out for Stroke.

Ollie was happily playing at his friend's house in Maesteg, Bridgend, when he collapsed. "I thought he'd just hurt himself," recalled his mum Nicola. "His head was down and I thought he was just a bit embarrassed, but when I lifted it up, his face was distorted and I could see something was seriously wrong."


The toddler was airlifted to the University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff, and placed in an induced coma while doctors performed brain scans. His parents were told he might not make it through the night, but against the odds, Ollie was brought out of his coma and spent the next few months in the care of stroke specialists.

"After the stroke he was like a newborn baby again," said the mum of three. "But he began holding his head up on his own and steadily learned to eat and talk. It was really special when he was able to say 'Mam' again."

Since leaving hospital, Ollie has continued to make a great recovery. "He's now running about, he's talking, but it's not 100% perfect. He has epilepsy and will need to take aspirin for the rest of his life, but he's now a healthy little boy."

Doctors have never discovered what caused the blood clot which led to Ollie's stroke but it is thought he'd had a stroke before. ▶

with a smile



"He's now running about, he's talking, but it's not 100% perfect."

There are over 400 childhood strokes a year in the UK and it is believed that a lot more children are having strokes than are actually being diagnosed.

Nicola is now trying to raise awareness of stroke in young people, and has helped organise events at Ollie's school, Caerau Primary, including an annual fundraiser to help teachers, students and parents understand more about stroke in children and adults.

In May 2016, Ollie, Nicola and their family took part in the Bridgend Step Out for Stroke event.

"We walked the whole route and Ollie made it about three quarters of the way and finished on my shoulders," said Nicola. "It was incredible seeing how much support we had – seeing all our friends, family and people from Ollie's school was quite overwhelming. Ollie took it all in his stride, like he does. Between



the three children there was a lot of excitement to be there."

"It struck me how many people are affected by stroke just near where we live and have been in our situation. By the end of the event I was really emotional. I saw hope in everyone there, all were survivors themselves or had loved ones who had had a stroke."

"I'm really looking forward to being a part of it again this year. I feel 2017 will be bigger and better. More of our family want to join, as well as the friends who came in 2016. It was a wonderful event to bring everyone together."

Join Ollie and his family, and take part in a Step Out for Stroke walk near you this May. In 2016, you helped us raise over £145,000 and with your continued support we are sure we can do even better in 2017.

We've got over 50 events planned across the UK that are open to everyone, regardless of age or ability. The walks can be taken at your own pace, are wheelchair friendly, and are a good excuse to get active and have a fun day out with friends and family.



» » » » » »
Find your local
walk by visiting
stroke.org.uk/step
or calling
0300 330 0740.
» » » » » »

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Make May Purple

Stroke is the fourth biggest killer and a leading cause of disability in the UK. Yet, stroke research remains underfunded compared to other conditions.

This year, we want to Make May Purple for Stroke and raise vital funds for stroke research by encouraging everyone to wear purple.

Dress head-to-toe in vivid violet or pick out your loveliest lilac accessory and show your support for stroke survivors across the UK.

As well as dressing up, we've developed loads of brilliant ideas for fundraising at home, work or school (see page 14-15).



Share your
purple pictures
on social media
#MakeMayPurple



Sign up today

Visit stroke.org.uk/purple or call **020 7566 1500** to get your purple action pack and help us to make May 2017 as purple as possible, while raising money for the Stroke Association.

...at school

Last year, pupils at Oxford Grove Primary School in Bolton, celebrated Make May Purple by hosting a series of fundraising activities, including a pyjama party (pictured), raising more than £1,500.

Year 5 and 6 pupils also enjoyed a stroke awareness session run by Scott Smith from the Stroke

Association. "The session gave us the chance to teach students about stroke by making neurons out of pipe cleaners," said Scott. "The children now know how to act FAST and it was great to see them asking some incredibly inquisitive questions."

"A number of children at Oxford Grove have experienced the

"We hope this money will help to save lives and prevent strokes happening in the future."

impact of stroke in their families and we are therefore very proud to have raised so much money for the Stroke Association," said Oxford Grove School Council. "We hope this money will help to save lives and prevent strokes happening in the future."



...at work

Anglian Water in Lincoln marked Make May Purple with a Know Your Blood Pressure day, giving staff the chance to get their blood pressure checked, and to receive advice about keeping it under control.

"Many people have no idea their health may be at risk due to high blood pressure," said volunteer Paula Smejka, whose husband John worked for Anglian Water until his stroke in 2011. "John and I were thrilled to organise



the event and hopefully help to reduce employees' risk of stroke."

Staff at Vision Express and Omron, also took part in Make May Purple, hosting bake sales and sponsored events.

...anywhere in your community

Get everyone you know involved by putting up posters or giving out postcards at your local GP, pharmacy, faith or community centre. Sign up today at stroke.org.uk/purple.



Donate online at stroke.org.uk/donate



Call our Supporter Care team on 0300 3300 40 to pay by debit or credit card



Post a cheque to:
Supporter Care Team
1 Sterling Business Park,
Salhouse Road, Brackmills
Northampton, NN4 7EX
(Please don't send cash in the post).

Take a moment...

to get your blood pressure checked

Stroke Association volunteer, Hendy Spence from Fintry near Glasgow, is on a mission to help prevent stroke.

Hendy understands the devastating consequences of stroke, and following her daughter's stroke in 2010 at the age of 32, is only too aware that stroke can happen to anyone at any time.

She became a volunteer because she wanted to 'give something back' and help increase awareness of stroke. Four years on, Hendy loves supporting the charity as a

Stroke Association Ambassador and a trained Know Your Blood Pressure (KYBP) volunteer. She takes people's blood pressures at public events to raise awareness of the link between high blood pressure and stroke.

In December 2016, Hendy was part of the team who ran a four-day KYBP event inside the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood, checking the blood pressures of more than

"As high blood pressure is not usually something that you feel or notice, it makes the job of spotting high blood pressure really important."

200 politicians and staff, including Cabinet Secretary for Health, Shona Robison MSP. "It was brilliant to see the MSPs taking time out of their busy schedules to talk about stroke and stroke prevention," said Hendy. "I get so much out of events like these as you really feel you are making a difference in helping to prevent a stroke and raise awareness of stroke."

"As high blood pressure is not usually something that you feel or notice, it makes the job of spotting high blood pressure really important. The only way to know your blood pressure is to have it measured, so I would encourage people to go to their local GPs surgery, pharmacy or one of the Stroke Association's KYBP events and get it checked."



Hendy takes Kezia Dugdale MSP's blood pressure



High blood pressure contributes to around half of all strokes in the UK.



The number of people diagnosed with high blood pressure in the UK has consistently increased since 2005.



A stroke can happen to anyone of any age. A quarter of all strokes happen to people of working age or younger.

Take a moment to get your blood pressure checked – it's quick, easy and painless. You can get yours tested by your GP, practice nurse or local pharmacist. To find your local KYBP event and download the blood pressure information pack go to stroke.org.uk/BPmoments.

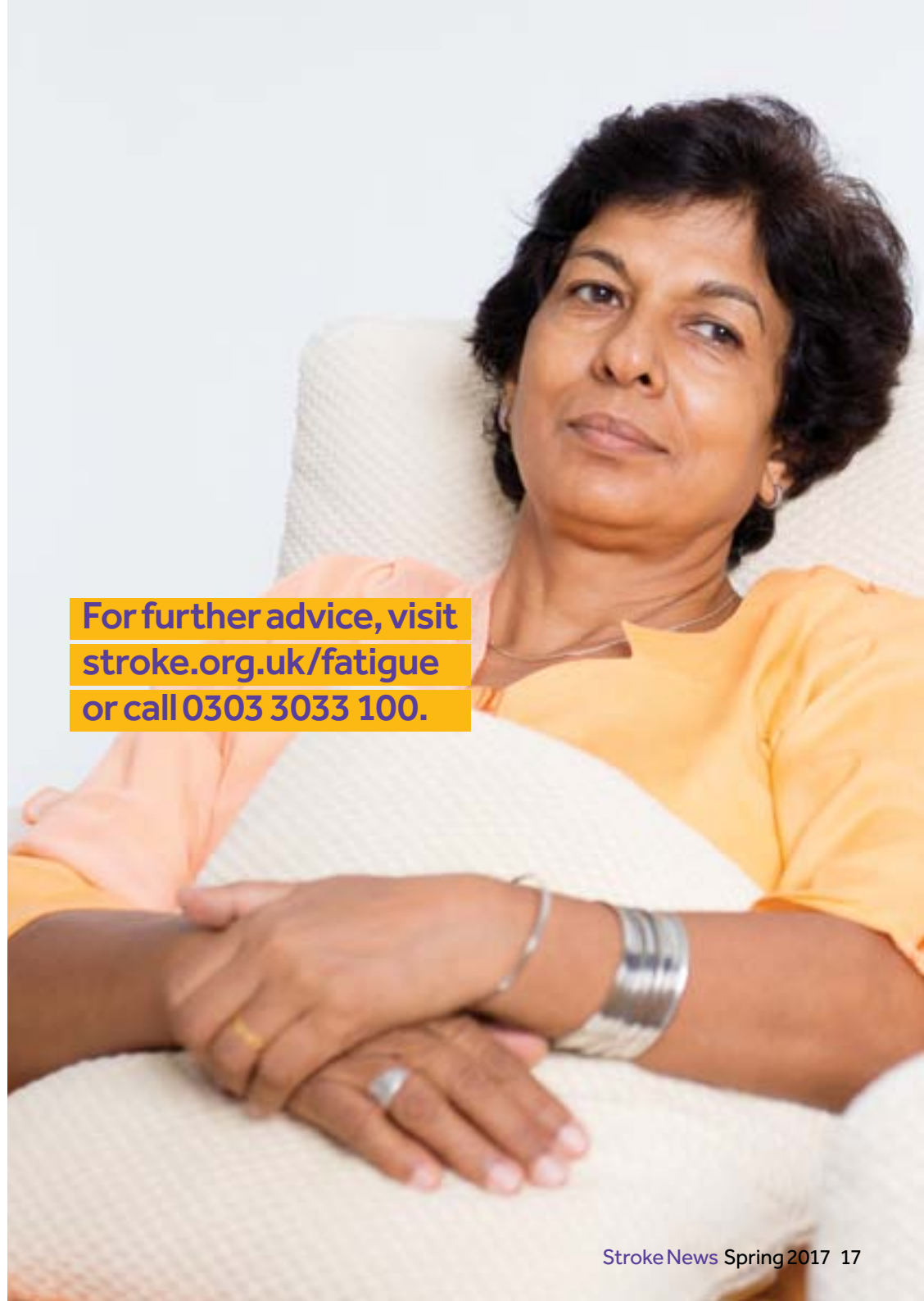
Fatigue after stroke

Half of all stroke survivors experience fatigue after stroke. It can make you feel exhausted and lacking in energy, however, unlike usual tiredness it doesn't improve with rest.

Post-stroke fatigue is still poorly understood and can have an impact on your daily life. However there are lots of things you can do to help manage it:

- Talk to your GP or stroke nurse. Find out if there are any medical conditions or medications that could be adding to your fatigue.
- Listen to your body. Don't force yourself to do everything you used to do straight away. Give yourself plenty of time, rest frequently and increase your activity gradually.
- Tell your friends and family what you are going through, so they can help you to deal with it.
- Exercising regularly can help to improve fatigue. Start gently with just a few minutes a day, and build up slowly.
- Celebrate your successes. Keep a record of your progress and concentrate on what you can do, rather than what you can't.
- Seek support. Your local stroke team, GP or occupational therapist can help to put you in touch with stroke groups, counselling, relaxation programmes, exercise groups or alternative therapies.

For further advice, visit stroke.org.uk/fatigue or call 0303 3033 100.



Friendship and fundraising

Stacey Hutton was 23 when a stroke left her with right-sided numbness and fatigue. But, with support from our Young Women After Stroke Group in County Armagh, she is building a new life and helping others to do the same.

On New Year's Day 2014, Stacey awoke feeling unwell. "As a care worker, I knew I had symptoms of stroke, but could still lift my arms," she recalled. "However, as the morning went on, I couldn't walk or swallow. I was taken to hospital, where they confirmed I'd had a stroke." Its impact - being unable to work, or play with her daughter - left Stacey feeling very low. "I felt like I was a burden to everybody and wondered if I would have a life again."

With support, she regained her ability to swallow and learnt to walk with the aid of a stick. Stacey joined Young Women After Stroke after being introduced to local Stroke Recovery Coordinator, Valerie Dale.

"Valerie was a breath of fresh air. She set up the group to help women aged 16-55 regain their independence; it's the only group of its kind in the UK. It's great to talk to other women who have been through similar experiences. We love being able to support each other and have a lot of fun."

Formed in 2015, the group has raised thousands of pounds to help fellow survivors. They've abseiled the Obel Tower, Ireland's tallest building; launched the (popular!) 'Strip for Stroke' calendar; hosted events including fashion shows and live music; and are now working on a book to help children better understand and support parents who have survived stroke.



"We're passionate about raising awareness that stroke can happen to anyone at any age. We want to give other survivors hope and show that there is life after stroke. I'm now expecting my third baby, so the girls say that's certainly true in my case!"



"We're all grateful to Valerie for running this group. It's been a lifeline; I've met life-long friends and regained my confidence. It's definitely benefited my recovery."

To find your local stroke group visit stroke.org.uk/SAclubs

FAST

Learn it. Share it.
You could save a life.



There are more than **100,000 strokes** in the UK each year; that is around one stroke every **five minutes**.



Every **two seconds**, someone in the world will have a **stroke**.

The FAST test identifies the three most common symptoms of stroke.

Do you know how to act FAST?



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: If you spot any of the above signs, always call 999.

Recognising the signs of stroke and calling 999 for an ambulance is crucial. The quicker the person arrives at a specialist stroke unit, the quicker they will receive appropriate treatment.

Every second counts when you are having a stroke. **Do the FAST test. Don't wait and always call 999 if you see any one of these signs.**



For more information visit: stroke.org.uk/actFAST
To order some FAST wallet cards visit our online shop stroke.org.uk/store

Feature

Discovering new talents

Gerry McCusker struggled to adapt after a stroke stopped him from pursuing his hobbies. But thanks to a Life After Stroke Grant, he's developing new skills and interests to help him to keep active and socialise more easily.

Before his stroke in 2015, Gerry worked in catering, and loved fishing, running and cycling as well as socialising.

Unfortunately the stroke caused mobility and memory problems, fatigue, aphasia and anxiety, preventing him from working and doing many of the activities he'd previously enjoyed.

Determined to regain his independence, the 54-year-old applied for a Life After Stroke Grant to buy a laptop to assist with his digital photography.



"The laptop allows me to edit my photos at home in my own time which really helps," said Gerry. "Photography helps me to get out and about. I then put the edited images on my social media page and love to read the positive feedback. It's like getting a pat on the back, making me feel worthwhile and useful for the first time since my stroke."

"The grants are life-changing to those who receive them. It has really lifted my spirits."

Find out if a Life After Stroke Grant could help you by visiting stroke.org.uk/LASgrants, calling our Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100 or emailing Grants.External@stroke.org.uk.

"You've got allies in parliament"

Over the last few months, we've continued to fight to make the voices of stroke survivors heard at a government level. In January, we took A New Era for Stroke, our campaign for a new national stroke strategy for England, to the next level at our parliamentary reception in Westminster.

More than 50 MPs and Lords from across the political spectrum joined us, a huge turnout for this type of event. During the reception, MPs, clinicians and stroke survivors shared their personal stories and explained why support is needed.

Stroke survivor Emma shared her shocking story of stroke after IVF, and how abandoned she felt when the care and support she needed stopped after she returned home from hospital. Our CEO, Juliet Bouverie, also gave a passionate speech, calling on MPs to take action.

Chris Leslie MP, who hosted the event, spoke about the impact stroke has had on his family: "It is a vital issue for me and I will continue to campaign in parliament with the Stroke Association to ensure survivors get the treatment and care they deserve to make the best recovery possible."

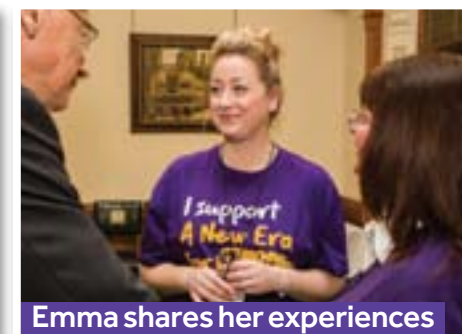
Many MPs including Penny Mordaunt, Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, pledged to support our campaign and drive forward this important issue in parliament. We'll be following up with these MPs to ensure that they help us to make a strong case for a national stroke strategy.



"It is a vital issue for me and I will continue to campaign in parliament with the Stroke Association to ensure survivors get the treatment and care they deserve to make the best recovery possible." Chris Leslie MP



Penny Mordaunt MP



Emma shares her experiences

This was a real landmark in the fight to implement a new stroke strategy, but the campaign does not stop here! Please write to your MP today to make sure they take action to help us get a new national stroke strategy. Visit stroke.org.uk/MP to access our template letter and find out more about the campaign.

Keeping active after stroke

Keeping active is great for your health; it can reduce your risk of stroke and improve your overall wellbeing. There are various ways you can be more active even if you find it difficult to move around.



Vicki Shattock from our Stroke Helpline answers some commonly asked questions.



Exercise is great for your general health and moderate exercise can even reduce the risk of stroke by up to 27%



Q Is it safe to return to the gym, or exercises such as jogging? Or am I increasing my risk of having another stroke?

Exercise is great for your general health and moderate exercise can even reduce the risk of stroke by up to 27%. However, if you've recently had a stroke, you may not be able to exercise regularly straightaway. You should only start exercising once you have recovered enough and only do as much as you can manage. It is also important to speak to your doctor before you become more active after a stroke.

Q Is it safe to exercise if I have high blood pressure?

It is safe to exercise if you have high blood pressure and exercising can actually lower your blood pressure. However, we do recommend you get your doctor or nurse's advice before exercising, especially if your blood pressure is very high or you are on blood pressure medication. You could also talk to your doctor about chair-based exercises to help you to gradually rebuild your fitness if they think you should not return to exercise immediately.

Q I lead a very healthy lifestyle, and regularly exercise so I am unsure why I had a stroke?

Although regular physical exercise does decrease your risk of stroke, there are certain things you can't change. You are more at risk if someone in your family has had a stroke; arteries harden and fur up with age, meaning older people are more likely to have a stroke; and men under the age of 75 have more strokes than women. If you are of a South Asian or African-Caribbean origin, you

are also more at risk of stroke. If you do have any of these risk factors, improving your lifestyle and getting regular exercise will certainly help you.



**Call our Stroke Helpline
on 0303 3033 100.**

For more information, see our **Exercise and Stroke** factsheet at stroke.org.uk/active

Biking back



Whether your stroke happened recently or a while ago, setting goals can help you get and stay active, benefiting your ongoing recovery.

Last year, 70-year-old stroke survivor Robin Cant took part in the Thames Bridges Bike Ride. Despite having limited mobility on his right side, he was determined to take on the cycling challenge to raise money for the Stroke Association. "My main problem was keeping my right

foot on the pedal," said Robin. "My children encouraged me to invest in an adapted trike which has all the controls on the left side and a specially adapted pedal with Velcro to hold my foot in place."

Robin practised regularly on his trike in the months leading up to the bike ride and completed the 35-mile circuit, raising over £1,200. "I felt a great sense of achievement at the finish line. The best bit was when I overtook someone on the Mall just before Buckingham Palace. You just have to keep trying."

Join the 2017 Thames Bridges Bike Ride on Sunday 1 October, and cycle our new 8-mile family, 35 or 50-mile routes, starting and finishing at Kings House Sports Ground, Chiswick. For details and to book your place, visit stroke.org.uk/bike or call 0300 330 0740.

Family moments, come rain or shine

Save up to an additional 10% on Haven's best public prices

We've teamed up with Haven Holidays to offer those affected by stroke additional discounts on family holidays and short breaks.

With 36 holiday parks offering an unparalleled range of facilities in some of the most spectacular locations in the country, Haven is the ideal choice for an active or relaxing UK break.



Call Haven on **0333 202 5423** and quote **CH_STROKEASSOC**, or visit stroke.org.uk/havenhols.

Their team will listen to your individual needs and are happy to help arrange the best break for you and your family. Plus, Haven will pay a contribution of 5% to the Stroke Association with every booking.

Haven will pay the charitable contribution of 5% of your accommodation price (excluding extras) to the Stroke Association. For further details and information on the additional discount, visit stroke.org.uk/havenhols.

Blooming


Gardening is a great way to improve your physical fitness and digging up weeds, gardening activities can be adapted to suit and build confidence.


The Stroke Association runs gardening projects around the UK, partnering with organisations such as Thrive, who use horticulture to help people with disabilities.


Thrive Horticultural Therapist Stacy Coull, works with stroke survivors at the Marquisway Life After Stroke Garden in Gateshead (stroke.org.uk/Tyne). She shares her advice on using gardening to aid recovery:

Getting started


These low-intensity activities can be done sitting down at a table either indoors or outside:


 Sowing seeds aids hand and finger movement, focus and coordination. Pea, bean, sunflower and Nasturtium seeds are large and easier to handle.

 Pricking out and re-potting seedlings helps with stretching by relaxing and lengthening muscles, while building confidence in your abilities.

 Potting on smaller plants into larger pots improves strength, stamina, hand-eye co-ordination and sitting balance.

Next steps

 More intense jobs such as pruning, deadheading and cutting back are excellent for exercising hand muscles and improve bending and stretching.

 If you have trouble standing for any length of time, keep a chair close by for regular breaks or sit while working.

marvellous

mental wellbeing after a stroke. From potting plants to you, and are a social, fun and rewarding way to keep active

Top tips

1 Keep yourself safe. Stay warm or cool depending on the weather and take regular rest and refreshment breaks. Don't over-do it and work at your own pace.

2 Adapted lightweight tools with longer handles, grip or arm supports can make gardening activities much easier.

3 Think about your garden's design and make it easy and safe to get around. Consider having a table to work at and a light-weight chair that can be easily moved to where you are working.

4 Raising flower beds or putting plants in pots that can be lifted onto a table to be weeded or deadheaded will prevent you from having to bend as much.



"I enjoy being part of the team. It has helped my anxiety and fear of being out on my own."



"It improves my mood and physical wellbeing."

For more information, visit www.thrive.org.uk or stroke.org.uk/SAclubs to find your local stroke groups.

The UK Stroke Assembly

Not giving up

In 2012, Mark Chappell suffered a massive haemorrhagic stroke, affecting his right side, speech, sight and hearing. His confidence took a huge blow, but with determination, a positive attitude and the support of local stroke groups, he is still seeing improvements both physically and mentally five years later.

"No one must give up, but it is hard work, so don't be too hard on yourself," said Mark. "Small gains are a big win and need to be shared."

Mark is now able to walk with a rollator, uses an iPad to work on his speech, and has taught himself to write with his left hand.

"We wanted to attend the Stroke Assembly to meet people in a similar situation to us as it can be very isolating at home," said Mark's wife Caroline.



"The Assembly was ideal as all the information we were looking for was in one place."

Having met and networked with people and stroke groups from across the UK at the Stroke Assembly, Mark was encouraged to set up a Facebook page for an aphasia group he attends, to help members keep in touch. He has become an active campaigner for the National Stroke Strategy, building the confidence to ask people to sign the petitions. He also wrote to his local MP, and received a positive response.



Join our workshops

"The workshops were very informative and we learnt a lot from the life stories of other stroke survivors," said Caroline. "The positive messages about recovery continuing after stroke were very welcome and encouraging to Mark. We fully intend to go again this year."



Try new products and services



Take action and join others affected by stroke at the UK Stroke Assembly. Have your say, influence future campaigns, share experiences and hear the latest developments in stroke care and research.



Hear the latest in stroke research and campaigns

Book before 2 May to attend a UK Stroke Assembly event near you:



**Crewe Hall, Cheshire,
30–31 May**



**Radisson Blu Stansted,
Essex, 3–4 July**

For further details of the talks, workshops and to book your place visit stroke.org.uk/SA or call **01527 903 917**.

Understanding

Apathy is a common but often misunderstood side effect of stroke. It can cause personality changes, making stroke survivors feel withdrawn, lacking in motivation, and unable or uninterested in engaging with family, friends and everyday activities.

Sometimes misinterpreted as laziness or boredom, post-stroke apathy is a devastating medical condition that can have a profound effect on relationships, recovery and quality of life.

Apathy has recently been recognised as a symptom in patients with cerebral small vessel disease (SVD). This attacks and narrows the blood vessels in the brain, restricting the blood supply and oxygen.

Currently, little is known about the condition and there are few effective treatments available. Having identified this critical gap in research, the Stroke Association awarded Professor Hugh Markus and his team a Priority Programme Award in 2016, funding a major research project to understand more about post-stroke apathy and how best to treat it.

"I've long been interested in the effects of SVD on stroke survivors," said Professor Markus. "It's one of the lesser understood diseases, yet it's responsible for causing nearly a quarter of all strokes."

"In my previous research, funded by the Stroke Association, I noticed a clear link between SVD and its debilitating symptoms. I've seen the terrible impact that this condition has on patients and their loved ones. If we can see the causes, then we have a chance of treating it and improving patients' recovery and quality of life."

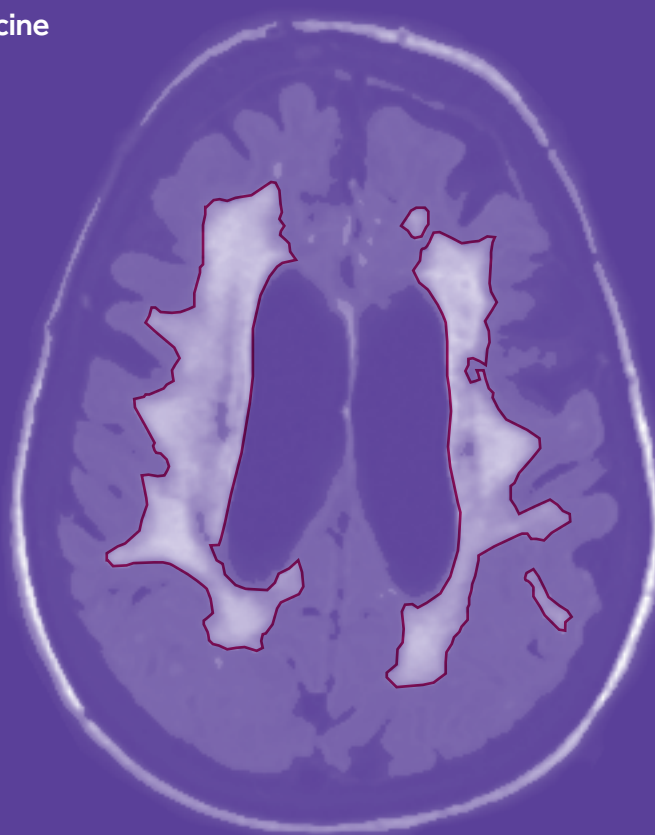
Stroke researchers from universities across the UK and the Netherlands are collaborating on this study. By working together, they will be able to increase our understanding of post-stroke apathy and bring it to the forefront of stroke medicine and research.

post-stroke apathy



Hugh Markus
Professor of
Stroke Medicine

- 1** The area highlighted is damage to the white matter in the brain. Inside there are lots of connections that send signals between the grey matter, processing areas of the brain.
- 2** SVD damages the small blood vessels in the brain and starves the white matter of oxygen.
- 3** This kind of damage can lead to delayed thought processing, problems with depression, multitasking, lack of motivation and feelings of disconnection.



We believe in the power of research evidence to prevent strokes, save lives and enable stroke survivors to make the best recovery possible. You can help to support stroke research by donating what you can at stroke.org.uk/donating or calling **0300 330 0740**.

Money matters

Council tax can be a sizeable expense for many households. The rate is set by local authorities and depends on the 'band' a property falls into. Not everyone has to pay the full council tax as their circumstances entitle them to a reduced rate. But people often miss out on discounts because they assume they won't qualify for them.



Council tax reductions only apply to households in England, Wales and Scotland. There is a different scheme in Northern Ireland.

Council tax discount scheme

In England and Wales you can get a single person discount of 25% if only one adult lives in a property. Some people are 'disregarded' as second residents for council tax purposes, including those with a 'severe mental impairment', for example, as a result of stroke. They need to be entitled to one of a range of disability benefits (even if they are not claiming it), and are expected to give the council permission to access relevant medical records. You can get a discount of up to 50% if everyone in your home, including you, is disregarded.

Council tax support

You may be eligible for a council tax reduction if you're on a low income or claim certain benefits, including disability and carers benefits.

Disabled band reduction scheme

Do you need to live in a larger property because you or another occupant is disabled? Is there an extra room adapted for the disabled person, or extra indoor space needed for using a wheelchair? If so, you could be entitled to pay the rate for the band below your property, or receive a further discount if your property is already in the lowest band.

Council tax exemption

Some properties are exempt from council tax. For example, if the only residents are severely mentally impaired; a property is unoccupied because the resident now needs to be cared for in hospital, a care home or with relatives; or they've gone to care for someone else, then no council tax is payable.

If you think you have been missing out on a discount or exemption:

- ➔ Put in a claim as soon as possible
- ➔ Reclaim any overpayments already made. You can do this if you have overpaid at any point since 1 April 1993 (when council tax was introduced). You will need to prove that the criteria for a discount or exemption applied at the time.

For more information and to claim:

- ➔ in England and Wales visit www.gov.uk/council-tax
- ➔ in Scotland visit www.gov.scot/counciltax
- ➔ in Northern Ireland visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates or call 0300 200 7801

If you need help with making a claim, contact Citizens Advice on citizensadvice.org.uk

For further advice and support, contact our Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100.



Puzzles

Puzzles can be a fun way to exercise your mind and improve concentration, understanding and memory.

Word search

W T Y T N J V E Y
A J O U S O G T B
L T F G I A I L U
K W K C E N F U L
I D E I U T E W C
N X N M A Y H Q U
G T M U R O F E L
S O J V B N E Y R
C A C T I V I T Y

FUN ACTIVITY
COMMUNITY CLUB
WALKING VOICE
MAY FORUM
FAST TOGETHER

Across

- 1 Far from the mark (4)
8 Tedious passage (8)
9 Goodbye (8)
10 Pieces of grain husk (4)
11 Small chicken (6)
13 Two-channel sound (6)
15 Recluse (6)
17 Yield (to superior force) (6)
19 Sensitivity in dealing with others (4)
21 Slow to reveal emotions (8)
23 Able to read and write (8)
24 Prepare (material) for publication (4)

Lottery

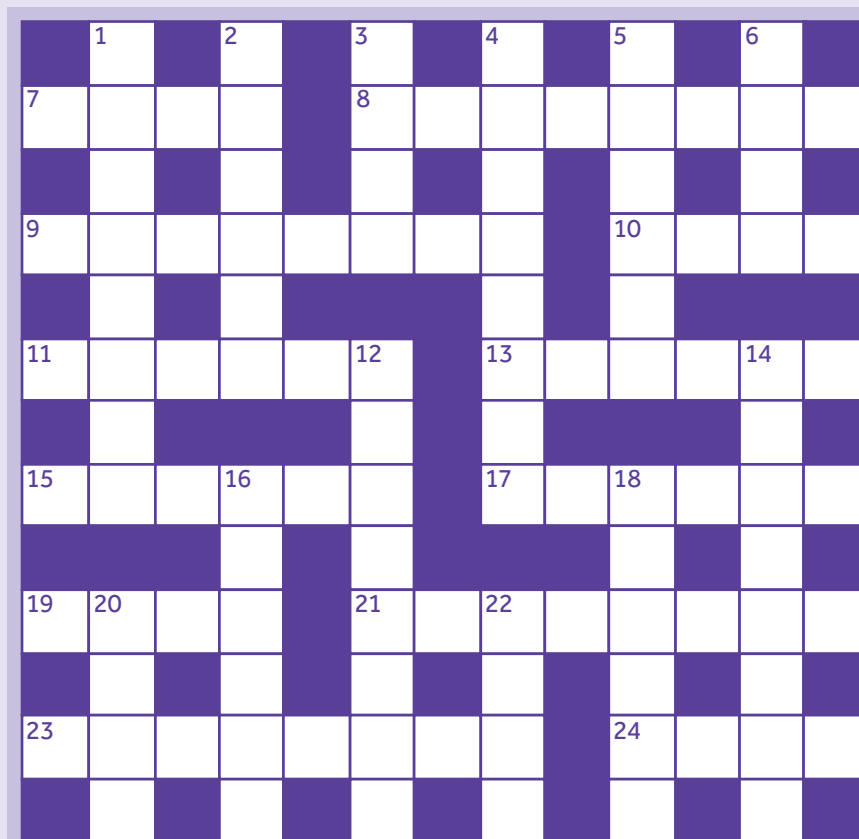
For your chance to win £25,000 every week, play the Stroke Association Charity Lottery. Find out more at stroke.org.uk/lottery



Solutions
See page
40

Down

- 1 Church residence (8)
2 Say again (6)
3 Adhesive (4)
4 Detailed interpretation (8)
5 Demolition debris (6)
6 American wild cat (4)
12 Major road (8)
14 Widespread outbreak of disease (8)
16 Incongruously varied (6)
18 Fast food item (6)
20 Line of rotation (4)
22 Observed (4)



With thanks to The Times/News Syndication who granted us rights to this crossword.

Together we can conquer stroke

As a charity, we rely on your support to prevent stroke and change lives. A huge thank you to everyone who's gone the extra mile to fundraise, volunteer and campaign with us.

Adam Kerry raised a phenomenal £17,023 by pushing a two tonne helicopter for 24 miles, in memory of his dad. Since 2012, Adam has raised over £30,000 by pulling and pushing large objects, including a boat and a tractor.



Thanks to everyone who participated in Give a Hand and Bake, including staff at 14 B&Q stores in the South East, whose tasty cakes raised £2,125.



Find out what events we've got coming up on page 40 or make a donation at stroke.org.uk/donating

How does your donation help?



£5 could help 15 people begin to come to terms with stroke with crucial factsheets.

£20 could support our Stroke Helpline to give life-changing advice to those in need.

£50 could help us continue to invest in research to prevent stroke and improve lives.



On World Stroke Day, Matt Keegan and Bella McGrath braved a shark dive. They raised £853 on behalf of Bella's sister, Hannah, a young stroke survivor who fundraised over £3,700 for us.



Congratulations to our Team Stroke Great North Runners, who collectively raised over £150,000.

Volunteer spotlight

Derek Rand had his stroke in April 2014. As a London bus driver he was medically retired due to severe problems with fatigue, memory and aphasia.

Thrown into premature retirement, Derek felt low and lost confidence. Attending a Stroke Association Communication Support Service helped him a lot.

In September 2016 he became a volunteer for the group and now supports others with aphasia.

"The Stroke Association was there when I needed help," said Derek. "Now I can help others. Volunteering has been absolutely crucial to getting my confidence back".



To find out more about the volunteering opportunities that are available visit stroke.org.uk/helpers.

Dates for your diary

Closing date for Stroke Awards 2017 nominations 30 April

Nominate your stroke hero for a Life After Stroke Award via stroke.org.uk/lasa17



2018 London Marathon Ballot opens 1 - 5 May

Please enter the ballot, select Stroke Association as your preferred charity then use your place to run with us! Visit virginlondonmarathon.co.uk

Last chance to book UK Stroke Assembly 2 May

Join us at our annual events for those affected by stroke (see page 31). Book via stroke.org.uk/SA

Aphasia Awareness Month 1-30 June

Help us to increase awareness of this communication disability by visiting stroke.org.uk/AAM

Superhero Tri 19 August

Join Team Stroke for a swim, bike and push/run triathlon at Dorney Lake in Windsor. Team up with disabled and non-disabled family and friends to take on a stage each, or fly solo. Find out more at stroke.org.uk/superhero



For more events and ways to get involved in our work, see stroke.org.uk

Crossword

Across: 7 WIDE, 8 LONGUEUR, 9 FAREWELL, 10 BRAN, 11 BANTAM, 13 STEREO, 15 HERMIT, 17 SUBMIT, 19 TACT, 21 RESERVED, 23 LITERATE, 24 EDIT

Down: 1 VICARAGE, 2 REPEAT, 3 GLUE, 4 ANALYSIS, 5 RUBBLE, 6 PUMA, 12 MOTORWAY, 14 EPIDEMIC, 16 MOTLEY, 18 BURGER, 20 AXIS, 22 SEEN

W	T	Y	T	N	J	V	E	Y
A	J	O	U	S	O	G	T	B
L	T	F	G	I	A	I	L	U
K	W	K	C	E	N	F	U	L
I	D	E	I	U	T	E	W	C
N	X	N	M	A	Y	H	Q	U
G	T	M	U	R	O	F	E	L
S	O	J	V	B	N	E	Y	R
C	A	C	T	I	V	I	T	Y