



Summer 2020

Stroke News

For everyone affected by stroke

Stroke
Association

"Sharing my experience of stroke helps people to know they aren't alone."

Alaire's volunteering story

This issue:

- Coping with fatigue
- Aphasia-friendly digital guides
- Simple home exercises
- Give a Hand and Bake

Finding help after a stroke

If you or someone close to you has had a stroke, we're here to help.

Contact our helpline:
0303 3033 100
stroke.org.uk/gethelp

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Contact us on **01604 687 721**, email strokenews@stroke.org.uk or visit stroke.org.uk/strokenews to:

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Editor's letter

I know it's been a difficult time for everyone. So this issue is all about what our stroke community is doing to support each other. From expanding our support services, to finding new ways to stay connected, we're focusing on how the Stroke Association and stroke survivors are adapting to their 'new normal'.

Our cover star, Alaire, has been using her lived experience of stroke to support others by volunteering for our new Here For You telephone support service (page 8). While around the UK, stroke groups are using all sorts of high and low-tech ways to keep in touch while they've been unable to meet face-to-face. Find out what they're up to on page 14.

Our Stroke Helpline Team are also here to help six days a week. They share their guidance on coping with fatigue (page 12) and dealing with debt (page 42). You can also find guidance on keeping active at home on page 28.

I wish you and your families well and hope you enjoy this issue.



Christine Webster, Editor

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Over to you

I'm four years post-stroke and have been thinking about the recovery process. I'm coming to see recovery as one of the biggest challenges of my life, especially as I'm now 76. That said, I'll never stop fighting to recover.

I do as much exercise as I can to try to improve my weak shoulder and wonky left arm and hand. Improvement is slow, but the shoulder is improving and the weak hand is becoming a bit more stable.

I often have to fight low moods and negativity. I do not give in, but have to work hard at that too. I sometimes lose balance and totter and sway like an ancient tree, but I tell myself, sternly, to focus and take care. I have also learnt not to overdo things and rest when my morning fatigue kicks in.

So there you go everyone - that's me at the moment. Still standing and still fighting on. Please do the same.

John Jeff Maynard
Shared on My Stroke Guide

Stroke Helpline: **0303 3033 100**

Find your local services, clubs and groups: **stroke.org.uk/support**

Join our online community: **mystrokeguide.com**

Find information about stroke: **stroke.org.uk/publications**



Do you have something to share?

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

From our Chief Executive

The coronavirus pandemic continues to make 2020 challenging for everyone. And it's been especially difficult for stroke survivors and their families. But our charity is doing everything we can to continue to support you to rebuild your life after stroke.

Thanks to funding from the NHS, we've started a new Stroke Association Connect service to enable us to be there for newly diagnosed stroke survivors when they leave hospital, and ensure they can get the help they need.

Stroke can be a lonely experience, but speaking to someone about how you feel can make a big difference to your wellbeing. Our Stroke Helpline (**0303 303 3100**) is just a phone call away.

They can also refer you to our new Here For You telephone service. This pairs stroke survivors and carers with volunteers who can call regularly to provide support, or just to chat. If you or someone you know is lonely or anxious and would benefit from this service, please call the number above.

I'm enjoying volunteering with Here For You – just being there to listen and provide emotional support can make a difference. If you'd like to volunteer, we'd love to hear from you.





You can also connect with our online stroke community on **mystrokeguide.com**, and access resources to help you to understand stroke and manage its effects.

I'm truly inspired and grateful for the efforts of the stroke community. From the staff and volunteers who're adapting to deliver our services and support remotely. To the stroke professionals working tirelessly to help stroke survivors through this pandemic. And to everyone who supports us by campaigning (page 18), fundraising, donating (page 35) or sending words of encouragement. A huge thank you.

As restrictions ease across the UK, we'll look for the best ways to support you, while protecting our staff and volunteers. In the meantime, please look out for our updates on **stroke.org.uk**.

Juliet Bouverie

With everything that's going on, it's important to remember that stroke is still a medical emergency. If you experience stroke symptoms, you must **Act FAST** and call 999:

-  Facial weakness
-  Arm weakness
-  Speech problems
-  Time to call 999

Juliet joins fundraisers across the UK for the 2.6 challenge, weeding her garden for 2 hours and 26 minutes!



Here For You

Adjusting to life after stroke can be a disorientating experience for stroke survivors and carers. And since the coronavirus pandemic, many are feeling more lonely and disconnected than ever.

Stroke survivor Alaire Fridd, understands just how practically and emotionally challenging stroke can be. That's why she started volunteering for Here For You. Our new telephone support service connects stroke survivors and carers with volunteers who can offer support and reassurance to help you rebuild your life after stroke. Or they can just listen if you'd like someone to talk to.

Alaire had a stroke in November 2017. "I was in Maidstone Hospital for five weeks," she remembers. "I now have limited use of my left hand and arm, drop-foot and hyperextension in my left knee, which makes walking difficult. However, I recently met a stroke survivor online who terms herself

'differently able', and I want to remember that from now on!

"While I was in hospital, I met Maria. We both had a stroke on the same day and were on the same recovery ward. On discharge, we went our separate ways but promised to keep in touch by text - which we did, until I dropped my phone in the toilet and lost all my contacts!

"I moved to live with my daughter and son-in-law in Gloucestershire. Shortly after, I discovered that a stroke group was being set up in the area. I thought joining would be a useful way of getting to know people and making new friends, so I gamely went to the inaugural meeting. Who was to know what opportunities it would open up?

"I thought it would be an interesting challenge, and a chance to use my experience to help others who'd recently had a stroke."





"I'd been volunteering with Gloucester and Cheltenham Stroke Group and had recently been part of a research project too, when I heard about Here For You.

"I applied for the Lived Experience Telephone Volunteer role, and attended the online training. During one of the sessions, I noticed that there was a 'Maria from Maidstone' on the course. Could it be the same Maria?

"Maria also spotted my name and texted me after the session to see if I was 'that' Alaire. What a pleasure it was to hear from her again! We've since been catching

up with each other's news and the progress we've made since our strokes. I'm looking forward to keeping in touch and renewing our friendship.

"I've been volunteering with Here For You for a couple of months now and have been matched with a few people affected by stroke. I'm always thinking about what I can give people during the call. Sometimes sharing my experience of stroke is helpful because it lets them know that they aren't the only person feeling like that. At other times, it's about giving someone a bit of encouragement or just listening.



"I really wish this initiative had been available after I had my stroke. I suffered from depression - a hidden effect of stroke - and it would've been lovely to have had a friendly voice to talk to.

"Volunteering has given me something to look forward to each week, especially during lockdown. It gives me purpose and makes me feel useful, which is important to my well-being. That date in the diary also seems

all the more important because you know the other person is also looking forward to the call.

"For anyone thinking about volunteering - just give it a go! I get as much out of the calls as the person I am supporting. Although I was nervous when I made my first calls, we'd had excellent training that helped me feel confident and made it much easier."

Find out more about volunteering for or using our Here For You service at stroke.org.uk/here or contact our Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100.

Coping with fatigue

"I feel exhausted all the time since my stroke." Sound familiar? You're not alone – many people experience fatigue after stroke. Fatigue isn't like 'normal' tiredness, which will usually improve with rest. It can have a huge impact on your physical and cognitive recovery, as well as your mental health.

Lucy from our Stroke Helpline shares some information and advice:

Q Why am I so tired?

It's likely to be a mix of physical and emotional factors, though everyone's different. For many people, ongoing recovery and rehabilitation means learning to use their body in different ways, which often needs a lot of energy. Stroke survivors with chewing or swallowing problems may also struggle to get enough energy and nutrients from their food.

The weeks, months - and sometimes years - after a stroke are often a worrying and frustrating time. Feeling anxious or depressed is incredibly common and can contribute to a sense of fatigue. Some

medications will also cause side effects including tiredness.

Q What treatments are available?

Currently, there's no specific treatment for post-stroke fatigue. However, speaking to your GP is a good starting point. They can check for any underlying health issues and consider other factors, such as medication. They can also refer you for further assessments if needed.

There are sensible things that you can do to try to minimise the effects of post-stroke fatigue. Listen to your body – don't do too much at once, and try to rest when you're tired. It's tempting to do more on 'good days', but this can sometimes make things worse.



Everyday activities, such as eating a meal, watching TV or having a chat to someone can be tiring, so do pace yourself.

Q How can I help a family member or friend?

Your loved one may 'look well' and appear to be making a strong physical recovery from their stroke. But recognising that their

fatigue is real and debilitating is very important. Try not to have your own expectations about what they should or shouldn't be able to do at different stages of their recovery. Give them the time and space to adjust to their 'new normal' and remember that sometimes just asking "how are you doing?" can make such a difference.



Call our Stroke Helpline on **0303 3033 100** or email **helpline@stroke.org.uk**.



For more information about post-stroke fatigue, visit **stroke.org.uk/fatigue** or **mystrokeguide.com**.

Keeping connected

Stroke groups across the country provide vital support to stroke survivors and carers.

Although they're unable to meet face-to-face, they've found all sorts of ways to stay in touch remotely - from online video calls and social media groups, to newsletters and good old-fashioned phone calls! Here's what some of the groups have been up to:

Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group:

The group's volunteers send out regular goody bags to their members. These have included food, afternoon tea, mindfulness paint-by-numbers canvases and many more activities, which members can then chat about online. One goody bag contained sunflower seeds - and so the sunflower race began!

"The sunflower challenge is great as it's given me something to focus on," says stroke survivor, Phil Thomas. "We've been sending each other photos and everyone has got involved."



"We've really come together and are like a family. We speak via Zoom daily with different challenges and games organised. If you have a bad day, there's always someone to chat to and help. The parcels they send us are a fantastic pick-me-up too, and always seem to come at the right time. I just hope my sunflower is the winner!"



Sussex Stroke Support Virtual Choir:

Volunteer, Carol Boydell, tells us about setting up a virtual choir:

"Following my stroke in 2015, I struggled with my words. My Stroke Association Coordinator, Marie White, was setting up a new choir and invited me. After a few meetings, I could tell the difference - I could form words and had much more confidence."

After lockdown, Marie and I were talking about how much we missed everyone, so we decided to hold the choir on Zoom [an online video call service]. Before I knew it,

I had 43 faces smiling at me from my computer screen!

We also have new members and people from other stroke groups wanting to join. We've now opened the choir to anyone who wants to come from the Stroke Association.

Singing is excellent speech therapy, and it's good for your wellbeing. I've had lots of people who've attended our virtual choir, say how grateful they are that they can socialise in safety - they feel happier after our meetings. I'm really happy they're benefiting from the joys of singing!"

Deeside Stroke Exercise Group:

Instead of their usual face-to-face exercises classes, Deeside have been keeping active on Zoom. At the start of each session, there's time for a catch up, before Anna, their physiotherapist, demonstrates the chair-based and weight-bearing exercises for rehabilitation. "We wanted to keep our classes going because



regular exercise is good for all of us and we enjoy it," says group lead, Eric Sinclair. "They've helped to give us some continuity, keep us in contact with one another and stay active at a challenging time."



Foyle Stroke Support Group:

Foyle are staying connected by getting creative. "I know how much members get out of attending the group, connecting and sharing with each other, so I send them monthly activity packs to ensure they carry on getting support," says volunteer Michelle Crawford.

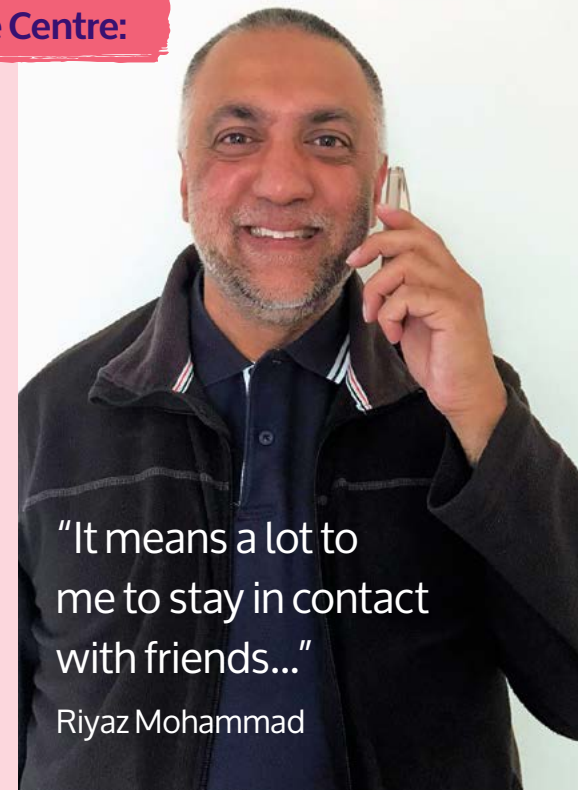
"We fully embraced Make May Purple. We made purple facemasks, designed our own posters and held a fancy dress competition, which put a smile on all our faces. We've also been sharing challenges, from baking to celebrity impersonations on our Facebook page."

Bromsgrove Life After Stroke Centre:

Although we've paused all activities at our Life After Stroke Centre, our staff are still keeping the community connected.

"We've supported almost half of our centre users to chat with other members through new technologies, like WhatsApp and Zoom, which they probably wouldn't have considered doing a few months ago!" says Activities Manager, Nicola Miller. "We also offer daily or weekly wellbeing phone calls. Both the video and phone calls are helping people to feel less isolated and put smiles on their faces."

Stroke survivor, Riyaz Mohammad, is enjoying the regular phone and online catch-ups. "It means a lot to me to stay in contact with friends and receive updates from the centre," says Riyaz. "If I have any problems, I know that I can speak to someone."



"It means a lot to me to stay in contact with friends..."

Riyaz Mohammad

Nicola and her team also run activity sessions online. "People are trying virtual sessions they wouldn't usually attend and are making new friendships," says Nicola. "Carers who don't normally attend the centre, are also getting the opportunity to join in and connect with other carers."

To find out what is going on in your area contact **0303 3033 100** or email your postcode to **clubtogether@stroke.org.uk** and we will link you to your local team.

Prioritising stroke in Wales

We're at a turning point for stroke in Wales. The Welsh Government's Stroke Delivery Plan ends in 2021, so we're calling on them to develop a new national strategic plan, outlining their approach to stroke care for the future. This will help to ensure stroke remains a priority in Wales, so services for all those affected by stroke don't fall behind other parts of the UK.

Find out how you can get involved in our campaigning around the UK, by signing up to our Campaigns Network: stroke.org.uk/campaigners.

We recently helped to lead an inquiry into stroke care in Wales and published a report with recommendations to the government for improving access to life-changing treatments, such as thrombectomy.

Thrombectomy is a new procedure that involves physically removing a blood clot from

the brain. It can vastly improve the chances of a good recovery.

However, hundreds of people miss out on treatment every year as the procedure isn't routinely available in Wales.



Stephen Attwood, 39, from Bridgend had to go to Bristol for a thrombectomy after his stroke in 2017. "When I found out later that thrombectomy isn't available in Wales, it was a scary thought. I got lucky - my stroke was on a weekday morning. If it had happened on the weekend, in the middle of the night or a holiday period, I wouldn't've had the

procedure and might never have been able to speak again.

"Thrombectomy should be available to everybody whether they're in England, Wales, Scotland or Ireland – it shouldn't be potluck. If there's a chance to get that clot out of your brain, it needs to happen, because in the long run, it'll save on NHS resources."

Our report also highlights the need for improvements to long-term stroke care, including better psychological support for stroke survivors.

"The emotional side of stroke has had a big impact on me," said Stephen. "While I was in hospital, I couldn't tell people what had happened to me without crying uncontrollably. Getting upset all the time was very strange because I wasn't really an emotional person before, and I found it quite stressful.

"Then there were other strange things going on in my brain - the dreams, lack of sleep, anxiety and depression. And the worry I'd have another stroke.

"Unfortunately, I didn't get much support – apart from the stroke nurse in Bridgend, who kept in touch with me. She didn't have to, it's not her role – she did it out of care, which I think is amazing. I had a visit from the Stroke Association too, which was reassuring.

"But when you're by yourself, and you can't think straight because you're so tired, it's difficult not to feel alone – you feel like you're

falling apart, even though physically you're ok.

"I'm doing better now. I still think about what happened to me every day, and the emotional effects are still there but I'm controlling

them. But it would have been good to have had support – whether it was just talking or medication – because it did get quite difficult. To me, it's as important to look after the mental health side of things as the physical."



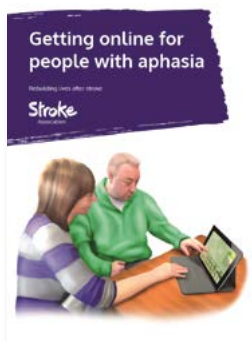
Campaigning from home

Here's how you've been helping us to continue raising awareness of stroke and its impact:

- Stroke survivors and carers signed our thank you card to stroke care professionals, sharing messages of gratitude and support with staff who're continuing to help people rebuild their lives during this challenging time. You can add a message by going to **stroke.org.uk/thanks**.
- You contacted local politicians on social media to remind them that stroke is still a medical emergency, and asked them to share the FAST message.
- Over 2,000 people affected by stroke around the UK took part in our survey about the impact of coronavirus on their wellbeing and access to support. We're now developing a report to highlight what challenges people have faced, what needs to be done to address them, and how you can help. Look out for the survey findings on **stroke.org.uk**.

Helping people with aphasia get online

During the coronavirus pandemic, more of us have turned to technology to keep in touch with family and friends. But for lots of stroke survivors, especially those with communication difficulties including aphasia, getting online can be a struggle. This can leave them feeling lonely and isolated.



We worked with a group of stroke survivors, including Tess Lancashire, to develop a new guide called 'Getting

online for people with aphasia'. The guide helps people to access technology so they can stay connected with loved ones and find support.

Tess has been living with aphasia since surviving a stroke 31 years ago.

"Aphasia is a real shock," she said "You want to get your message out and have a

conversation. When you realise that is not going to happen, it affects you psychologically."

Determined to move forward, Tess did a technology course to help with her recovery. "Even something like copy and paste, which might be easy for others, was difficult for me. I had to do the course three times to help me practise."

Tess's experience inspired her to co-develop a computer access course for people with aphasia with City University, London. Using tools like social media, email and video calling, helps people's recovery, improves their confidence, and makes it easier for them to communicate with family and friends.



You can view and download 'Getting Online for People with Aphasia' at: stroke.org.uk/aphasiaonline. Or call **01604 687 724** to order a print copy.

Lockdown would be very different for me if I did not use technology," said Tess. "I have been using Zoom for meetings and catching up with friends. I can't imagine what it must be like for some people during this tough time.

"People with aphasia are capable and intelligent. Aphasia should not limit you, but sometimes you need help. I'm pleased with 'Getting online for people with aphasia'. I think it is important to have a guide that people can use to practise and get support.

"If you are new to technology or are starting to relearn, remember - don't panic! Just go at your own pace, and focus on the sections that you need."

Tips for carers supporting people with aphasia to get online:

- Make time to work through the guide. Be patient, let the person with aphasia set the pace.
- Take regular breaks.
- Help to practise by repeating tasks. Demonstrate what to do and support if needed.
- Be encouraging and stay positive.

Baking friends



Budding baker, John Carlow, 63, was celebrating his wife's birthday in 2017, when he had a stroke that left him with communication, physical, memory and cognitive problems.

"I was determined not to let my stroke stop me from living my life," says John. "I've always enjoyed baking, but now it's become an important part of my recovery and wellbeing too. It helps me to use areas of my brain that were affected by my stroke, and work on my handgrip exercises.

"I'm part of a Stroke Association Group in Jersey and often take my bakes along. They're a bit

of an icebreaker, especially when new members join. Once I've shared them out, I can sense the group relaxing and opening up. It's wonderful what my raspberry jam doughnuts can do! The smiles on their faces gives me immense pleasure and makes the time worthwhile.

"Here's my recipe and top tips. Have a go and try them for yourself!"



John's Raspberry Jam Baked Doughnuts



Ingredients for the dough:

450g bread flour
7g yeast
1 teaspoon salt
275ml milk
50g unsalted butter
1 beaten egg
75g caster sugar



Ingredients for the filling and sugar coat:

100g caster sugar
1 tablespoon cinnamon
100g unsalted butter
Raspberry jam (with or without seeds depending on what you like!)

"I always have all the ingredients measured and within reaching distance prior to starting."

Method



Step 1: Make the dough

1. Mix the bread flour, yeast and salt in a bowl.
2. Bring the milk to the boil. Take it off the heat and add the butter.
3. Add the beaten egg into the milk and butter mix.
4. Mix the dry ingredients and the wet ingredients together until it forms a stiff dough.
5. Rest for two hours.

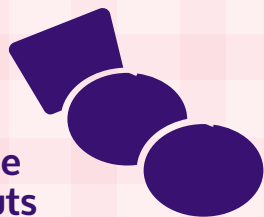
"I break the method into different actions to help me remember where I'm up to and to make following the recipe simpler and less tiring."

"Get all the equipment you need ready before you start so you don't have to search for it while you're cooking."

"I try to use my hands to mix ingredients as it's good rehabilitation. But you can use an electric mixer if it's easier for you."

"This recipe takes time, but this gives me time to rest and recover too."

Step 2: Shape the doughnuts



6. Flour the surface and gently knead the dough.
7. Cut the dough into equal portions (about 50g each) and shape them into smooth balls.
8. Put them on a baking tray and leave them for an hour to rise.



"I turn them over halfway through cooking. I use a timer to help me remember I've put them into the oven."

Step 3: Bake



9. Heat your oven to 220°C.
10. Put your dough in the oven for 15-18 minutes until brown.
11. Once baked leave to cool.

Step 4: Make the filling and sugar coat:

12. Melt the butter.
13. Add cinnamon to the caster sugar.
14. Use a brush to cover each donut with a bit of butter. Then roll them in the sugar/cinnamon mix to coat them.
15. Syringe the raspberry jam into the middle of the sugared doughnuts.
16. Enjoy and share with others!



"I use a big syringe so it is easy for me to handle."

Join John and our UK-wide community of bakers hosting bake sales for Give a Hand and Bake from 26 October – 1 November 2020. Find out how you can get involved at stroke.org.uk/bake.

Moving more at home

Whether your stroke was recent or many years ago, moving more can make a difference to your wellbeing, recovery and confidence. There are lots of ways to add movement into your daily life. You can be active in your home – you don't need to do sports or join a gym.

These are some ideas for movements to try at home.

Remember:

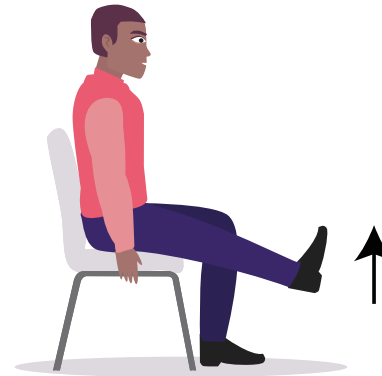
Every stroke is different, so you might not be able to do all of these movements. Only do activities that are safe for you. If you're not sure, ask your therapist or GP for advice.

On a bed:

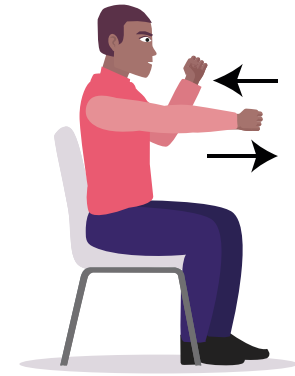
Lying down with your knees bent, keep your feet and knees together and roll your knees slowly from side to side.



On a chair:



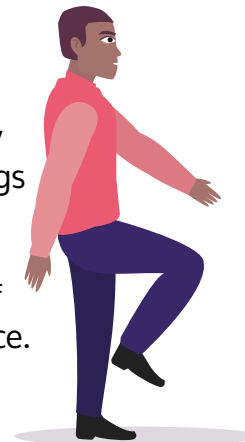
Single leg lift: Lift one leg, keeping it straight. Lower it slowly. Repeat with the other leg.



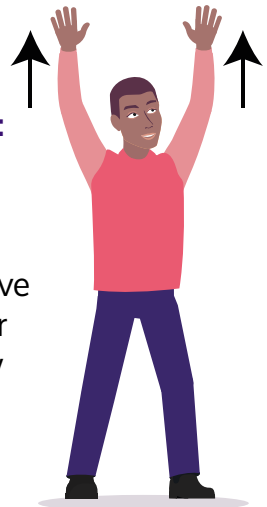
Air punches: Reach your arms forward one at a time to hit an imaginary punching bag.

Standing:

Marching on the spot: Walk on the spot and gradually increase arm swings and knee lifts until you're marching. Hold onto a chair if you need assistance.



Overhead press: Start with your hands in front of your shoulders and push up above your head. Lower your arms slowly and repeat.



For more practical tips and exercises for different abilities visit stroke.org.uk/moving or call **0300 3300 740** to order a printed copy of our 'Getting active after stroke' guide.



You can also watch videos about staying active on mystrokeguide.com, and find more information and exercises at weareundefeatable.co.uk.



Fun in the snow

Congratulations to Mark James, for winning our 2020 Christmas Card Competition with his beautiful painting, 'Fun in the snow'.

Mark and his wife were picking up dinner from the local fish and chip shop when he had a stroke and collapsed in the car. "For the first week after my stroke, I wasn't sure what had happened to me," remembers Mark. "I knew the right side of my body wasn't working and I couldn't talk or say anything at all.

"I love to draw and paint. Before my stroke, I used to do big paintings and sell them at art fairs. After my stroke, it took a while for me to get back into it because I couldn't feel one side of my body. I got a Life After Stroke Grant from the Stroke Association for a new easel to help with my balance so I could continue with my art while I recovered. It's great."

Mark has also used painting to help him communicate and express himself. Regular readers might remember Mark's dragon painting - featured in our summer 2019 issue of Stroke News – that he created to help describe his experience of stroke.

He often shares his paintings with his fellow group members at the Stroke Association's South Tees Communication Support Service, and with their support, has made great progress with his recovery. "The group has been fantastic and has changed me so much," says Mark. "I can now speak to people at the craft fairs I attend, which would never had happened before.

Our festive range of cards, including Mark's 'Fun in the snow' design, are now available to order. Visit stroke.org.uk/Christmas or call 0300 330 0740.

If you'd like to get creative and submit your design for the 2021 Christmas card competition, visit stroke.org.uk/cardcomp21.

"I was so pleased to find out that I had won this year's Christmas card competition. My painting is of my grandchildren having lots of fun building snowmen by the River Leven in Great Ayton. I hope it helps to raise funds for other stroke survivors and their loved ones."



Predicting the future



After a stroke, people often want to know how their recovery could progress in the future. Right now, there aren't many tools available to help health professionals to predict recovery, so we're funding research to change this.

Here are some of the ways our researchers are looking to improve our understanding of recovery:



Using brain scans

Many stroke survivors have mobility problems in their hands and arms. Recovery can be more predictable for stroke survivors with mild difficulties, but it's harder to predict if they're severely affected.

Professor Nick Ward is exploring whether information from stroke survivors' brain scans can help to predict how stroke survivors with severe difficulties might recover their movement.

Nick says: "Our goal is to understand the mechanisms of recovery so that we can predict what treatments will work best for stroke survivors."



Creating new vision tests

Vision problems after stroke can make everyday tasks challenging. Currently, there isn't a way to test stroke survivors' vision to find out what impact it'll have on their daily life.

Dr Kathleen Vancleef wants to solve this. She's working with stroke survivors to trial a new test that could predict the effect of stroke-related vision problems on survivors' daily life after six months.

Kathleen says: "I hope my research will help stroke survivors to understand more about their condition, so they know what rehabilitation or adjustments they need to make lives easier."



Developing computer models and databases

Some stroke survivors respond better to speech and language therapy than others, so we've funded two studies to make it easier to predict how quickly or fully someone's communication might recover.

The first study collected information from the brain scans of over 400 stroke survivors with communication difficulties. This improved the accuracy of a database for professionals to use to predict communication recovery.

Dr Tom Hope is now developing this database further by adding information about the speech and language therapy stroke survivors receive.

Tom said: "This data could help us to predict how well stroke survivors may respond to language therapies for aphasia, enabling us to plan and provide treatment that's most suitable for them, helping them make a better recovery."

Find out more
about our work at
stroke.org.uk/research.



Exploring the long-term effects of cognitive changes

Stroke survivors often experience changes to their mood and thinking. They might worry more, lack confidence, or have difficulty concentrating. These problems can improve or get worse over many years.

Until now, research has only followed people for a short time after their stroke. This means we don't have enough information about how these problems may change over time to be able to predict how they can expect to recover and respond to treatment.

We're funding Dr Nele Demeyere and her team to follow 200 stroke survivors for three years to find out how stroke affects mood and thinking in the long-term.

Nele says: "Understanding the impact these effects have on people's lives and recoveries will help stroke survivors and their families plan for the future, and enable scientists to develop effective treatments and coping strategies."



Support stroke research

Stroke research continues to be severely underfunded and this has been made worse by the coronavirus pandemic. But with your support, we could continue to fund stroke research and help more survivors and their families to rebuild their lives.

Please donate what you can at stroke.org.uk/donating, by calling **0300 330 0740** or by completing the form below:

I enclose my total gift of £

Funds raised will go towards vital services and pioneering research to help rebuild the lives of people affected by stroke.

</We> enclose a cheque made payable to Stroke Association OR please debit
<my/our>: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ CAF Charity Card

Card no: - - -

Expiry date: /

Signature(s):

Date:

 / /

SN20DON

FN: STRK0028

Make your gift worth 25% extra with Gift Aid

To enable us to claim the tax already paid on your donation, please tick the relevant box below. This will mean that if you are able to give £20, Gift Aid would make your gift worth £25.

giftaid it

☐ I am a UK taxpayer and would like to Gift Aid this donation and any donations I have made in the past four years, or I make in the future to the Stroke Association. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax each tax year (6 April to 5 April), than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all of my donations, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Date: / /

☐ Sorry, I am not a UK taxpayer, and therefore cannot take part in Gift Aid.

Return your form

Please detach this form and post to:

**Stroke Association, Bumpers Way, Bumpers Farm,
Chippenham SN14 6NG**



Keeping in touch

We would love to send you information about the difference you can make to families affected by stroke through campaigning, volunteering, donating and through your own fundraising. Please tell us how you'd like us to stay in touch by filling in your details below.

How would you like to hear from us?

☐ Email ☐ Text ☐ Phone

Your name:

Please enter your phone number or email:

Address

Postcode

Our Promise

Your privacy is our priority. We promise to keep your details safe and will never sell them. We will also keep in touch by post about how we can continue to support you, and opportunities to support us.

If you would like to change the way you hear from us, just call **0300 3300 740** or email **supportercare@stroke.org.uk**. How we protect and use your personal data is set out in our privacy policy at **stroke.org.uk/privacy**.

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Stroke
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We're here to rebuild lives affected by **stroke.**

Find out more:
stroke.org.uk/RebuildingLives

Stroke
Association



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Also registered in the Isle of Man (No. 945) and Jersey (NPO 221), and operating as a charity in Northern Ireland.

Our Book of Remembrance

Legacy gifts play a pivotal role in funding our work. They support vital research projects and strong improvements in our care services, helping to rebuild countless lives in the process.

Mrs Freeman from Bedford, is part of our community of generous supporters who've pledged to leave a gift in their Will.

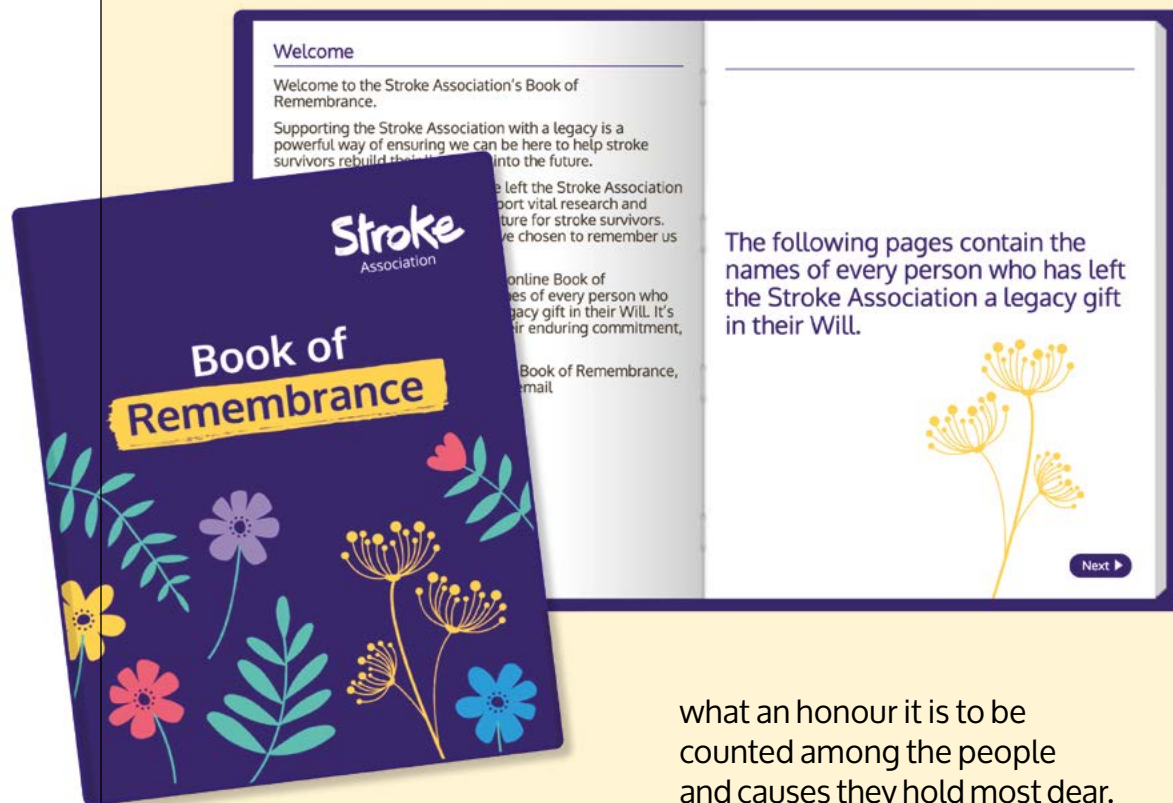
"Several years ago my mother had a stroke, the effects of which gradually worsened over time," said Mrs Freeman. "It completely changed how I viewed stroke, as it had such a huge impact on her.

"The Stroke Association were a huge help at that time, and have also been there for me after I had a TIA last year. It's amazing to see how stroke survivors can make such strong recoveries, when they receive the kind of support and rehabilitation that is now available.

"That's why I left the Stroke Association a legacy in my Will. It reassures me greatly to know that they'll be there to help other stroke survivors in the future, and to invest money in finding new treatments."

To mark the enduring generosity of those who have chosen to remember our charity in this lasting way, we have created our online Book of Remembrance.

The Book of Remembrance contains the names of everyone who has left us a legacy in their Will, and is updated monthly to include each new gift we receive. It's our way of thanking everyone who has made supporting our work a part of the legacy they want to leave behind.



what an honour it is to be counted among the people and causes they hold most dear.

We also want the book to show supporters who are considering leaving a gift to the Stroke Association, or have already done so, that we appreciate

"I really like the idea behind the Book of Remembrance," said Mrs Freeman. "It's lovely to think that when I do pass away, a record of my legacy will live on."



Visit stroke.org.uk/BookofRemembrance to view our Book of Remembrance. If you would like to find out more about the Book of Remembrance or leaving a gift in your Will, please get in touch with our Legacies Team on **020 7566 1505**, or at legacy@stroke.org.uk.

Simple swaps: cutting back on salt

High blood pressure is one of the biggest risk factors of stroke. It usually has no symptoms but is a contributing factor in around half of all strokes.

High blood pressure is preventable, and making small changes to your diet, such as reducing the amount of salt you eat, can help to lower your blood pressure and reduce your risk of stroke.

Our new partners, LoSalt®, share some practical tips to help you cut back on salt:

- Use garlic, chilli, herbs, spices, lemon or lime juice, rather than salt, to season when cooking at home.
- Choose tinned fish in spring water instead of brine.



Did you know?

Around 9.5 million people in the UK have diagnosed high blood pressure. But for every 10 people diagnosed, another seven don't know they have it. That's 5.5 million people living with undiagnosed, untreated high blood pressure in England alone. You can get your blood pressure checked at your GP or local pharmacy.

- If you can't avoid using salt in your food, switch to a reduced sodium salt* such as LoSalt® – this contains 66% less sodium than regular table, sea and rock salts, without compromising on flavour.

* If you take medication that affects potassium levels, for conditions including diabetes, heart or kidney disorders, speak to your GP first to check if reduced sodium salt alternatives are suitable for you.



Find out more about **#HealthierUK** and get more information on healthy eating at stroke.org.uk/healthierUK and losalt.com.

Remember

- Sea, rock, pink and flavoured salts contain the same amount of sodium as regular table salt. They aren't better for you, so if you have to use them, use sparingly.
- Check the nutrition labels on foods like bread, breakfast cereals, soups, ready meals and sauces, as they can often contain a lot of added salt.
- Try to cut back on saltier foods like cheese, crisps, salted nuts and processed meats including bacon, ham and sausages.

We've partnered with **LoSalt®** for a **#HealthierUK**, to encourage people to lower their risk of stroke. For every promotional tub they sell between July and September, LoSalt® is donating 20p to the Stroke Association to help to rebuild lives after stroke. They're also sponsoring this year's **Give a Hand and Bake**, and sharing some of their tastiest low sodium bakes.

Money matters

It can be hard for stroke survivors and their families to cope with the financial aftermath of a stroke. Struggling to keep up with essential bills and other regular payments can mean extra stress and worry at what is already a difficult time. Our Stroke Helpline Team talk you through some steps you can take if you're struggling with debts:

1 Complete a budget sheet – List all of your current household income and expenses. This can be daunting, especially if your outgoings are higher than your income, but will really help you to decide what your options are.

You can find most of the information you need on bank statements. You can also check wage slips, benefit and tax credit or pension award letters and any letters from companies you pay bills to or owe money to.

You can find example budget sheets on the websites listed opposite. A debt adviser can also help you to complete a budget either in person or over the phone.

2 Maximise your income – Are you receiving everything you're entitled to? You can use the free online calculator at **entitledto.co.uk** or speak to **Turn2Us** on **0808 802 2000** to check. You may even be able to get one-off payments from a charitable grant or trust fund.

See our 'Benefits and financial assistance' factsheet: **stroke.org.uk/benefits**.

3 Work out which debts you need to pay off first – Organise your debts into 'priority' and 'non-priority' debts.

Priority debts are bills that, if unpaid, might lead you to lose something essential. For example, not keeping up with rent or mortgage payments may lead to losing your home. It's important that these are paid first.

Non-priority debts – These include unsecured lending such as bank, credit union and payday loans, overdrafts, credit or store cards and catalogues. Your home and essential services aren't at risk if you can't pay, so you have more scope to make reduced or zero payments if you need to.

With both priority and non-priority debts, it's helpful to contact your creditors to let them know you're dealing with the situation. Visit **nationaldebtline.org** for more advice about dealing with creditors.

Where can I get more information?



Different rules apply depending on where in the UK you live, so seek specialist advice to make sure you get the best guidance for your circumstances.

England, Wales and Scotland

Stepchange
Call **0800 138 1111** or visit **stepchange.org**.

National Debtline
Call **0808 808 4000** or visit **nationaldebtline.org**.

Citizens Advice
England and Wales - **citizensadvice.org.uk**
Scotland - **cas.org.uk**

Northern Ireland

Advice NI
Call **0800 028 1881** or visit **www.adviceni.net/advice/debt**.

Puzzles

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

Word search

E G S R Z I L W T
T C E N N O C E F
A E T U I F L M U
L L R S G E C O T
E P Y A P I E H U
R H G H H X T W R
P V O H A S W A E
Q N R E C I P E F
E M T E N I L N O

Share
Telephone
Connect
Relate
Physio

Recipe
Future
Home
Online
Fatigue

Across

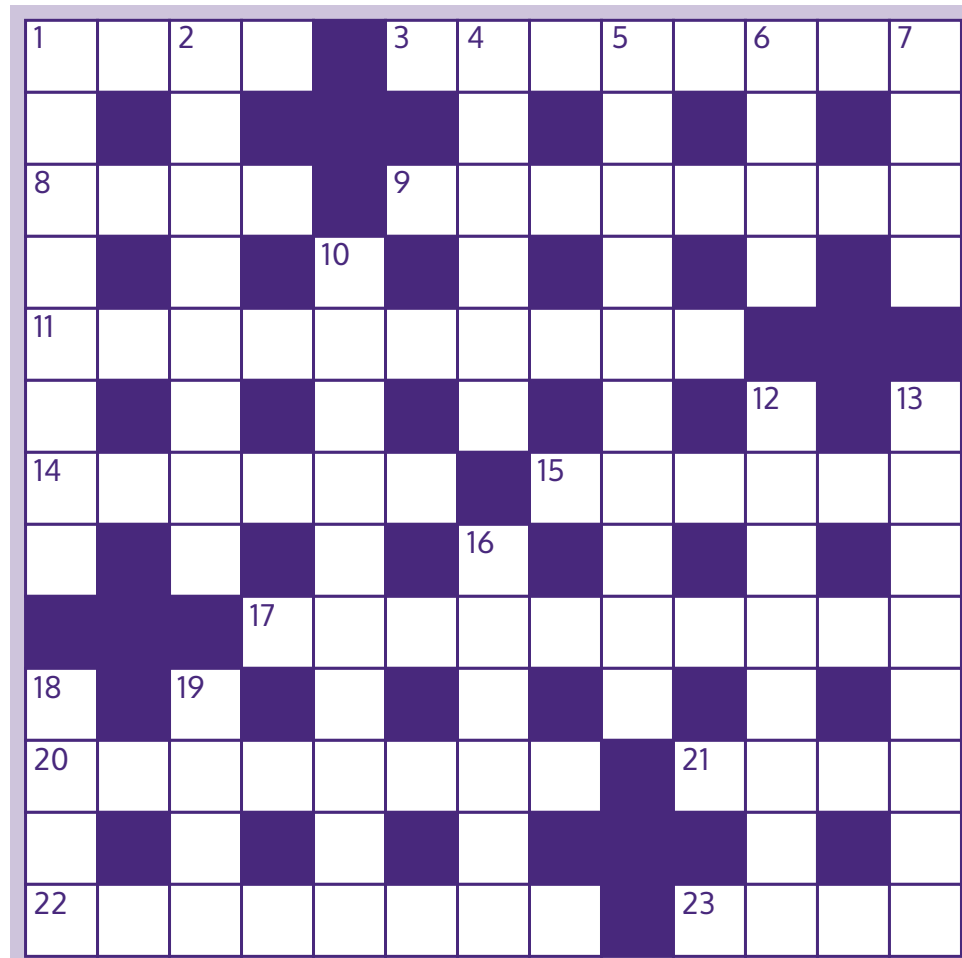
- 1 Deal with (something) hurriedly (4)
- 3 Fluvial deity (5,3)
- 8 Innocent; not mixed (4)
- 9 Italian noblewoman (8)
- 11 More important than (any other considerations) (10)
- 14 Group of singers (6)
- 15 Sunrise song (6)
- 17 Young woman (archaic) (10)
- 20 Absolute, utter (8)
- 21 Prickly shrub (4)
- 22 Synthetic rubber-like polymer (8)
- 23 Sicken with excessive sweetness/richness (4)

Lottery

For your chance to win £1,000 every week, play the Stroke Association Weekly Lottery. Find out more at lottery.stroke.org.uk.

Down

- 1 Expression of disapproval (8)
- 2 Inspector of buildings (8)
- 4 Tristan's lover (6)
- 5 Put out (a light/fire) (10)
- 6 Speak effusively (4)
- 7 Expensive; sweet (4)
- 10 Bird shooting land (6,4)
- 12 Large bird (5,3)
- 13 Burial ground (8)
- 16 Fruit similar to lychee (6)
- 18 Public school (4)
- 19 Town and lake in north Italy (4)



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

Solutions
see page 48

Rebuilding lives after stroke

Our charity supports people to live the best life they can after stroke. But rebuilding lives is a team effort and we need your help. A huge thank you to everyone who's gone the extra mile to fundraise, volunteer and campaign with us. Your support means we can reach even more people who need us.

Higgins family

Thanks to everyone who supported us by taking part in the 2.6 challenge on 26 April. Among them were the Higgins family, who although separated across five countries, decided to take on the challenge together in memory of their Nana. 11 of them, aged from 78 to 18 months old, took



on 10 challenges, including a 260km indoor bike ride, 26 minutes of hula hooping and walking 26 steps unaided, and raised over £1,000.

John Bevan

Congratulations to stroke survivor John Bevan from Aberdeen, who walked a million steps around his garden during lockdown, raising over £13,000. That's over 400 miles walked, climbing and descending the equivalent of Everest twice!



Find out what events we've got coming up on page 48 or make a donation at stroke.org.uk/donation.

How does your donation help?



£5 could help us to provide crucial factsheets about stroke to 25 people.



£10 could help us produce vital information and a range of communication aids to help stroke survivors express themselves.



£29 could support our Stroke Helpline in providing emotional support to someone as they begin to rebuild their life after stroke.



Mayor of Erewash

A huge thank you to The Mayor of Erewash, Councillor Sue Beardsley, and everyone at Erewash Borough Council for supporting Stride for Stroke, helping us to raise money and awareness of stroke.



Volunteer spotlight

Rhys Donnelly, from Glasgow, is a 'Connect and Chat' volunteer, offering telephone support to stroke survivors and their families.

Our new service matches people affected by stroke, with volunteers who can listen and chat through their experience and concerns.

"Lots of people are struggling with the isolation and loneliness," said Rhys. "But I really believe that being a listening ear can be a comfort, and talking things through can be reassuring."

"I'm glad to feel like I'm helping, and I hope the experience I gain with each call will be of benefit to the people I speak to in the future."

To find out more about our volunteering opportunities, visit stroke.org.uk/yoursupport.

Dates for your diary

Although many face-to-face events are on hold for the moment, there are still lots of ways you can get involved and fundraise at home:

Your quiz

Challenge your friends and family with our virtual quiz. We'll send you 50 questions and answers, plus top tips for successful quizzing. Sign up at stroke.org.uk/quiz.

Virtual Resolution Run

Run the distance you want, at a time and a place that suits you. Whether that's in your local park, taking the dog around the block or jogging on the spot, the challenge is yours to set: resolutionrun.org.uk/virtual.



Stride for Stroke

Challenge yourself to walk 1.2 million steps in 120 days. That's one step for the 1.2 million stroke survivors in the UK and works out at 10,000 steps a day. Find out more: stroke.org.uk/stride.

Christmas shop opens 10 August

Buy Christmas cards, including the design by Mark, our competition winner (page 30): stroke.org.uk/Christmas.

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

Crossword solution

Across: 1 Rush; 3 River god; 8 Pure; 9 Contessa; 11 Overriding; 14 Chorus; 15 Aubade; 17 Demoiselle; 20 Thorough; 21 Rose; 22 Neoprene; 23 Cloy

Down: 1 Reproach; 2 Surveyor; 4 Isolde; 5 Extinguish; 6 Gush; 7 Dear; 10 Grouse moor; 12 Eagle owl; 13 Cemetery; 16 Longan; 18 Eton; 19 Como

