



Stroke News

Winter 2020

For everyone affected by stroke

Stroke
Association

"We have a
second chance
at life together."

**Rob and Syreeta
find hope after
stroke**

This issue:

- Staying in touch with your loved one in a hospital or care home
- Tell us your views on Stroke News
- Getting support with your energy bills

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

Find out more:
stroke.org.uk/RebuildingLives

Stroke
Association



Contents

Features

8 Finding hope after stroke

Stroke survivor Rob and carer Syreeta look to the future

14 Stroke recoveries at risk

The impact of coronavirus on stroke survivors and how you can help

24 Building friendships remotely

How Garry found support through online groups

28 Improving conversations about recovery

Researcher Louisa Burton talks about her work

Guidance

12 Staying in touch with loved ones in hospitals and care homes

26 Money matters

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

- Subscribe to three editions of Stroke News per year for free (online, in print or audio)
- Change your preferences to online to help save the charity money
- Unsubscribe.

Editor **Christine Webster**
Design [fullyfledgeddesign.com](https://www.fullyfledgeddesign.com)
Published by **Stroke Association**,
240 City Road, London EC1V 2PR.

Advertising **Square7 Media**. Contact hello@square7media.co.uk
Volume 38.3 Winter 2020 © Stroke Association 2020



Editor's letter

Hope has been important to us all this year. But it's especially vital when rebuilding your life after stroke. This issue, stroke survivors and carers share their stories of hope and encouragement.

"We see hope in the little things," say cover stars Rob and Syreeta. Since Rob's stroke, they've found hope in recovery victories, support from their family and us, and in looking to the future (page 8).

For Garry (page 24), hope comes from the support he receives from his local stroke group online, and in helping others.

Our Stroke Helpline also offers hope by being there for you. They share guidance on contacting loved ones in hospital or care

homes if it's not possible to visit (page 12).

On page 21, you'll find details about our reader survey. Please fill it in and let us know what you think of Stroke News – your views will help us to improve the magazine in the future. And you could win £100 of vouchers.

I hope you enjoy this issue.



Christine Webster, Editor

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided in this magazine is accurate, but we cannot guarantee accuracy and the information provided does not constitute legal or other professional advice. Opinions expressed in this magazine are not always to be taken as the opinions of the Stroke Association. Advertisements, products or services listed are not necessarily recommended by the Stroke Association. Stroke News is printed on paper from sustainable sources.

The Stroke Association is registered as a charity in England and Wales (No 211015) and in Scotland (SC037789).

Also registered in Northern Ireland (XT33805), Isle of Man (No 945) and Jersey (NPO 221).

Over to you

I had multiple strokes in September 2004 in my 50s. I was in a coma for weeks, in hospital for three months and rehabilitation after. I had to learn to speak, eat and walk.

At first, the confusion and tiredness was overwhelming. It was so easy to be waited on and fussed over, but I wanted something more for myself. My family learned to give me space and let me try.

I went to physio, then our local gym. The nurses got me on my feet and I learned to walk with a stick. And if I forgot everything

around me I could concentrate on eating and drinking. This didn't happen over night, but I was not going to let stroke beat me.

I know I will never be as I was, but even now, 16 years on, I find I can do things, I couldn't before. So don't give in or up. It takes time, but never say never - just give things a try.

Please pass on my hope and encouragement.

Pam Croll

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**.

My Stroke Guide

Online stroke support

Stroke can change your life in an instant, but recovery is possible. As well as free access to trusted advice, information and support 24/7, My Stroke Guide connects you to our online community, to find out how others manage their recovery.

Stroke
Association

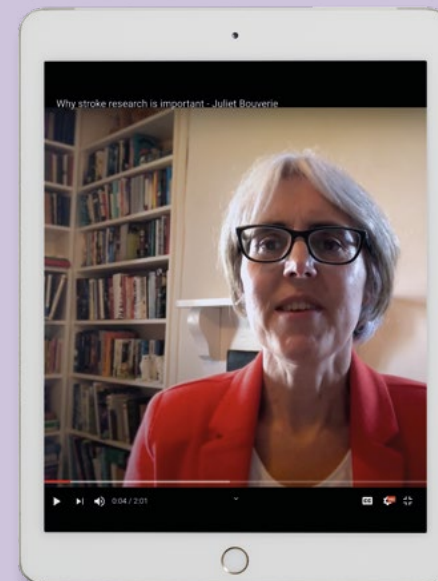


From our Chief Executive

Stroke recovery is long, uncertain and challenging. There may be set backs along the way but hope – alongside support and determination – can keep you going.

Our charity provides hope simply by being there. Whether it's a call to our Stroke Helpline (**0303 3033 100**), support from our local coordinators, or a friendly chat with a stroke survivor or carer at one of our support groups, or on **mystrokeguide.com**, we're here to help you rebuild your life after stroke.

Although coronavirus has had a huge impact on us this year, we're continuing to provide you with information and support. I was thrilled to be involved in our first virtual UK Stroke Assembly. We hosted two six-week programmes of webinars on everything from staying active, to managing finances, to support your recovery at home. You can watch the recordings of these sessions on **stroke.org.uk/UKSA20**.



But the disruption to health and care services over the last few months has had a huge impact on every aspect of stroke treatment and care. So we're calling on governments and local decision-makers across the UK to urgently act on the recommendations in our 'Stroke recoveries at risk'. See page 14 to find out how you can get involved.

You can help too by continuing to volunteer, fundraise or donate. Your ongoing support makes all the difference. Thank you.

Juliet Bouverie

Finding hope after stroke

Rob and Syreeta were designers living in Hong Kong, when Rob had a stroke in September 2014. "We were on holiday in Sydney, which was beautiful," remembers Rob. "We went to sleep and then bang – I can't remember."

Syreeta woke up to find Rob stumbling around their room. "It was horrific," she recalls. "I pulled up the black-out blind and glorious sunshine burst into the room. Rob screamed. His speech was slurred and I immediately thought he was having a stroke."

Rob was in an induced coma for three weeks. "We didn't know if Rob had a future. We were told he wouldn't survive the operation, and then that he wouldn't survive the next 72 hours. To cope I concentrated on what we needed to do minute to minute, hour to hour.

"When Rob came out of his coma, the nurse said, 'Syreeta's here' and he did his upmost to turn his head, find me, look me in the eye and

smile. I thought, 'He remembers me, and he's there'. That gave me something to hold onto - hope. To know that whatever the journey was going to be, he was there and we'd get him back."

Rob had a massive bleed in his brain that left him unable to read, write or speak. He also had complete paralysis down his right-hand side. "The way I describe it is that every slate has been wiped clean," says Syreeta. "He had to learn how to swallow, how to chew. It was like starting back at the beginning.

"The impact on me was massive too. It's like a ripple, it doesn't just affect the person who has the stroke. We lost our jobs, we lost our home, we lost our identities all overnight.

"The impact on me was massive too. It's like a ripple, it doesn't just affect the person who has the stroke." Syreeta



"It's been a tough time and we felt very lost and unsure. That's where the Stroke Association website came into its own. I started devouring all the guides and thinking about the future, seeing that there was support out there.

"I also called the Stroke Helpline. I was in very deep stages of grief at that point. Just to have someone to listen who understood the complexities of what had happened made us feel less alone.

"I see glimmers of hope in the little things. Rob couldn't speak, but seemed to understand what I said. So I thought perhaps he could draw? I tried to draw a dodgy bike. Rob, being an avid cyclist, drew a beautiful bike in the right proportions. We communicated through drawing for a year and a half."

Through our vital support services, like the Stroke Helpline, we help people to find the glimmer of hope they need to rebuild their lives after stroke.

Rob says: "Life is challenging and at times incredibly hard. But art and drawing is therapeutic, it's a new thing for me."

Rob and Syreeta now have a baby son, Grayson, who is helping them focus on their future as a family.

"I feel like we have a second chance at life together," says Syreeta. "Every day is a gift. That fuels the hope in my heart. We've got each other, and a little bit of love goes a long way.

"Life is different, but here we are. Why wouldn't we get married and have a family? Why should our hopes and dreams and wants be pushed to one side because of what's happened? It's important for people to see that and to know that there's another way. I'm so proud of Rob. Of both of us."

Watch Rob and Syreeta's video and find out how we provide hope after stroke at stroke.org.uk/rebuildinglives. If you or someone you know needs support, call our Stroke Helpline on **0303 3033 100**.



Staying in touch with loved ones in hospitals and care homes

Many UK hospitals and care homes have stopped or limited visits to reduce the risk of people catching coronavirus. Being unable to see loved ones face-to-face, especially after a stroke, can be very stressful and upsetting.

Simon from our Stroke Helpline has experienced this himself. "I'm a carer for my mum, who had a stroke ten years ago," says Simon. "Mum was recently in hospital for several weeks and my family and I couldn't visit her, so I understand the worry and challenges that this brings.

"I've put together some information to help you to stay in touch with loved ones if visiting isn't possible."

Q How can I contact family and friends in hospitals and care homes?

- Ask for the name of a staff member who can talk to you regularly. This will limit the amount of times you have to repeat information or pass data security questions.
- Send your loved one a mobile phone or a device, such as a smart tablet, so you can contact each other directly rather than going through the switchboard. Some hospitals also have schemes where they can lend patients devices so they can video call their families.
- If your loved one has communication difficulties, try two-way video apps, such as Zoom or FaceTime, so you can use gestures or visual communication tools.



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

- Send photos or other small home comforts to personalise their bed space. This can provide reassurance and help if they have memory problems. You can also send in books and magazines to keep them engaged.
- Write a letter or a card to let them know you're thinking of them.

Q **When can I contact them?** Hospital wards and care homes typically follow a routine, and may be more able to help with queries, calls or using technology at quieter times. Speak to a ward manager or your main contact about the best time to call.

Your loved one may also be more alert, or willing to talk, at certain times of the day. Find out when the best time to call is by asking them directly, or talking to the staff.

Q What can I do if I have questions about care?

Patients and their relatives can ask for information to make sure they understand their treatment. If you have questions or concerns, you can ask to speak to the health care professionals who are looking after your or your loved one's care. You can also contact the hospital's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) for advice.

Stroke recoveries at risk



"All my physiotherapy has been cancelled and I've had no help at all. I have no idea what to do next as I've got no access to the experts for more information."

Craig Lockett, 45 from Stoke-on-Trent, had a stroke caused by a bleed on his brain in December 2018. With rehabilitation, Craig has regained his speech and learned to walk again. However, like many other stroke survivors across the UK, the coronavirus pandemic has severely disrupted his recovery.

We recently surveyed almost 2,000 stroke survivors and carers and found that the pandemic and lockdown have affected every aspect of stroke treatment and care.


"The coronavirus pandemic has had a huge impact on all of us," says Craig. "I used to have

physiotherapy once a month and it really helped. But I've had to do my exercises myself since my last appointment in January. After working hard to walk again, it's been a big setback to my recovery and confidence."

The pandemic and lockdown have also affected Craig's emotional wellbeing. "I want to get out and do exercise, but I don't dare. People don't move aside, even though they can see I have problems with my walking.


"I feel depressed. I like being out, talking to people and raising awareness, but now I feel so trapped."

Sadly, Craig is not alone. We found that:

39% 
of stroke survivors who had a stroke in 2020 said they hadn't received enough rehabilitation.



Around half of stroke survivors had therapy appointments or home care visits cancelled or postponed.

68% 
of stroke survivors have felt more anxious and depressed. Many told us they felt lonely and had gone days without social contact.



Over half of people who are caring for stroke survivors say they feel overwhelmed and unable to cope.

We've published these findings in our 'Stroke recoveries at risk' report, along with our recommendations to the UK's governments to ensure that stroke survivors and carers get the help they need.

We're calling for:



All stroke rehabilitation to meet national clinical guidelines, so all stroke survivors can access the vital support they should be receiving.



Stroke teams to follow up with all stroke survivors who had a stroke in 2020 to review and address their recovery needs.



Increased access to mental health services for stroke survivors.



Governments and local authorities to provide more support to carers.

We need your help to ensure that everyone affected by stroke gets the support they need. You can:

- Read our report on stroke.org.uk/recoveries-at-risk. Or call **0207 5660341** for more information about the report.
- Contact campaigns@stroke.org.uk or **0207 5660341** to tell us how coronavirus has affected you, find out how you can support the campaign or join our Campaigns Network.



Acknowledging my anxiety

Stroke is a life-changing event. Understandably, many stroke survivors and carers struggle with anxiety in the aftermath.

Denise Watson, 47, from Belfast, had two strokes in 2018. "I was terrified of having a third stroke," says Denise. "It got worse when, in April 2019, I had a mini-stroke (TIA). The doctors didn't know the cause of the strokes, so couldn't rule out another happening.

"I felt very anxious every time I spoke about my experience. I couldn't even say the word 'stroke' to my friends or family. I didn't talk to anyone about how I felt because I didn't want to worry them."

Recognising that Denise needed support, her stroke consultant referred her to our Emotional Support Service (now called First Steps) in spring 2020. The service, the first of its kind in Northern Ireland, offers stroke

specific emotional support to survivors and carers. We also run similar emotional support services in Sheffield, Colchester and Liverpool.

"I was able to say things to Marie, my Stroke Association counsellor, that I couldn't say to my family," says Denise. "I felt like a weight had been lifted off me."

Although Denise and Marie couldn't meet face-to-face because of the coronavirus pandemic, Denise welcomed their remote sessions. "We'd schedule sessions for when I'd have the house to myself and could open up. Talking over my feelings helped me to rationalise my fear and anxiety.

"I've learnt to devote time to my wellbeing and will forever remember Marie's words: 'You cannot give from an empty cup.'"

What can I do about anxiety?

Try relaxation



Techniques such as breathing, meditation and mindfulness, can help when you feel overwhelmed.

Keep active



Exercise can lift your mood and distract you from negative thoughts or feelings.

Talk about it



Talking about you feelings – with a health professional, family member, friend, or support group – can be a release. Expressing yourself through writing, art or music can also help.

Download our 'Emotional changes after stroke' guide from stroke.org.uk/emotion or call **01604 687 724** to order it in print. Catch up with our 'Tips and techniques for managing your emotions' webinar on stroke.org.uk/UKSA20-A6.

Learn more about the Northern Ireland First Steps project at stroke.org.uk/firststeps or call **02890 508020**. To find support in your area, visit stroke.org.uk/support or call **0303 3033 100**.

This candle helps to rebuild lives after **stroke**

Our spiced fig candles make a great gift or a well-deserved treat for yourself.

Whether purchased in memory of a loved one, for a stroke survivor in honour of their recovery or simply to support the work of the Stroke Association, every candle sold will help to fund stroke prevention, research and support.

Shop the Stroke Association Candle at stroke.org.uk/candle

Stroke
Association



© Stroke Association 2020
The Stroke Association is registered as a charity in England and Wales (No 21015) and in Scotland (SC037789). Also registered in the Isle of Man (No. 945) and Jersey (No. 221), and operating as a charity in Northern Ireland.



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

Tell us your views on Stroke News



We're always looking to make the magazine better and to make sure we're giving you the stories and information you want.

Your views could win you £100 M&S vouchers (see survey for more information).

Whether you've been reading Stroke News for years or have just subscribed, we'd love to hear what you think. Please fill in our short survey at stroke.org.uk/SNsurvey20.

We've also included printed surveys with your magazine. If you'd like to take part, but haven't received a print survey and can't get online, contact us on the details below.



If you have any queries about the survey or need support, please contact strokenews@stroke.org.uk or **01604 687 721**.

Justine's memory lives on

"Justine was compassionate and always made time to help other people. She was a devoted mum and an amazing person to be around."

In December 2017, Stephen Kinnaird's partner, Justine, sadly died from a stroke. She was only 46.

"Justine had been for a walk with our daughters Thea and Elsa," says Stephen. "She had a sore head so went for a lie down. When she got up, she was walking very lopsided and couldn't speak."

"The A&E specialist said it was a massive stroke. She passed away four days later on 10 December 2017. The weeks and months that followed were the most difficult of my life – the grief was unbearable at times."

"Justine had a very generous, caring side to her, so I felt the best thing to do in her memory was to raise money. I set up a

fundraising page before her funeral and printed it on the order of service. We raised over £6,500.

"Since Justine's death, my friends and family have rallied round and helped me through the worst of it. I've been overwhelmed at their compassion and continued support."

"In 2018, a group of us formed #TeamJustine and started training together for the Great Scottish Run. It wasn't just about getting fit or doing something in Justine's memory – we wanted to make people aware that stroke doesn't just happen to elderly people, it happens to young people too."

After running the Great Scottish Run in 2018 and 2019, #TeamJustine had raised nearly £19,000. This year, they took



part in a virtual distance challenge they named #JustinesMiles. Collectively they ran, walked and cycled over 10,000 miles – the distance from Glasgow, where Stephen and his daughters live, to Brisbane, Australia. They raised nearly £7,000 – bringing their total to just over £25,500.

"Justine was amazing as a mum, she made it look effortless," says Stephen. "Now, I'm learning to be mum and dad. It's been tough but the girls and I are getting stronger."

"We're proud that we've managed to raise so much money. I can't think of a better way to keep Justine's memory alive."

Tribute Funds are an online space where you can share memories of your loved one, while raising life-changing funds. Visit tributefunds.stroke.org.uk or call **0300 3300 740** to find out more.

If you'd like support with grief and bereavement, contact our Stroke Helpline on **0303 3033 100**, or helpline@stroke.org.uk. You can also download our guide on stroke.org.uk/bereavement or order it in print on **01604 687 724**.

Building friendships remotely

Garry Rees, from Tredegar, Wales spent Christmas in hospital, after he had a stroke caused by a bleed in his brain in December 2019.

"Before I had a stroke, I was running, swimming and cycling every week," says the 55-year-old computer engineer. "My stroke left me with right-sided weakness. I couldn't physically do anything, which really got me down.

"My family were amazing. They helped me to learn the things I needed to get back to some semblance of normality. I went back to my childhood - Lego, Meccano and jigsaw puzzles. All helped me with my dexterity, and each thing I built gave me a great sense of satisfaction and the hope I needed at the beginning of my recovery."

However, after three months of gradual progress, the coronavirus pandemic brought Garry's rehabilitation to an abrupt halt.

"When we went into lockdown, I spiralled into a depression. The stroke gave me heightened emotions. I'd get very angry or burst into tears and sob like a child. I had no control over it. It was so alien to me, and I didn't know what was causing it or how to stop it.

"I was having a really bad day when Lauren Heath from the Stroke Association emailed me to tell me they were running virtual stroke support groups and encouraged me to attend."

With Lauren's support, Garry joined the Blackwood Stroke Group. Although Stroke Association clubs and groups



have paused their face-to-face meetings, many are staying in touch online using social media or video call services, such as Zoom.

"There are so many great characters in the group, which has a lovely family feel to it," says Garry. "They know how I feel as they have been there too. They show me there is hope after having a stroke."



"Joining the group has also given me a purpose as I've been helping members who struggle to attend the Zoom meetings because of computer issues. I collect their computers, at a social distance, and fix them. Helping others to get online and be part of the group again in these difficult times is great. It's good for me too and helps with my recovery."



Many stroke clubs and groups are offering remote support. To find out what's going on in your area call **0303 3033 100** or fill in our referral form at **stroke.org.uk/clubreferral** and we'll put you in touch with your local team.

Money matters

After a stroke, you might find that you're spending more on household energy bills, especially if you have a medical condition or during the colder months. However, there are options you can explore to make your home more energy efficient, reduce your bills or get extra help if you need it.



1 Talk to your current energy provider

Check that you're on the cheapest tariff available to you. If you're struggling with your bills, ask if they can offer you any help, such as putting you on the priority service register to receive additional support.

2 Look for a cheaper energy provider than your current supplier

There are a range of energy comparison websites that will help you to find the best deal for you.

The most popular organisation is **Uswitch**, who compare prices for many of the UK's biggest energy providers. Visit **uswitch.com** or call **0800 6888 557**.

3 Apply for the Warm Home Discount Scheme

Through this government scheme, you can get £140 off your electricity bill. The money isn't paid to you, it's discounted directly from your energy bill between September and March.

For more information, visit **gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme** or call **0800 731 0214**.

4 Check if you are eligible for a Winter Fuel Payment

If you were born on or before the 5 October 1954, you could get between £100 and £300 to help pay your heating bills. This is tax-free and paid regardless of your income or savings.

If you're eligible and already receive a state pension or certain other benefits, you should receive this payment automatically. You only need to make a claim if you are of the right age and don't receive any benefits, or only receive Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction or Child Tax Credit.

To find out more about the scheme or make a claim, visit **gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment** or call **0800 731 0160**.

5 Apply for help with energy saving home improvements

If you're a homeowner or residential landlord, you can apply for different schemes to help pay for the cost of installing energy efficient improvements to your home:

England

gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-green-homes-grant-scheme

Scotland

homeenergyscotland.org

Wales

nest.gov.wales

Northern Ireland

nihe.gov.uk/Community/NI-Energy-Advice



For more information and support, contact our Stroke Helpline on **0303 3033 100** or **helpline@stroke.org.uk**.



You can also download our 'Benefits and financial assistance' guide from **stroke.org.uk/benefits** or order it in print on **01604 687 724**. And see page 32 to find out about our partnership with British Gas.



Improving conversations about recovery

Stroke changes lives in an instant. Recovery, however big or small, takes time. It's important for healthcare professionals, such as doctors, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists, to talk to stroke survivors and their families about their recovery.

The right information, at the right time, can give hope and enable people to understand what their life after stroke might be like. Unfortunately, people often tell us that they didn't get the information they needed to help them plan and adapt.

We're funding Louisa Burton at the University of Leeds to work with stroke survivors, carers and stroke professionals to develop training and support for staff so they can discuss recovery in a way that meets their patients' needs.

"In my work on stroke units, I saw too many patients and their families struggling to have conversations with professionals about the future that were



Louisa Burton

helpful," said Louisa. "We want to find out how staff can talk about recovery at the right times throughout a person's stay in hospital. So when it's time for them to continue their journey of recovery, and adapt to the effects of their stroke at home, they don't feel disappointed or distressed.



"Some stroke survivors and their families expect life to go back to how it was, whereas for healthcare professionals, the meaning of recovery can be different. Professionals can try to assess what a stroke survivor might be able to do in the future. But these predictions aren't set in stone, and staff are sometimes afraid to talk about recovery in case they're wrong.

"In my research, I've found that most patients just want to feel staff are being honest - and to say when they don't know.

They want the chance to ask questions, and to focus on the positives, like the things that they can do.

"It's important for professionals to make it clear that recovery is long-term and continues after rehabilitation in hospital. Supporting staff to talk more confidently and effectively about recovery will help stroke survivors and families to better understand and manage the effects of their stroke, feel more hopeful and improve their quality of life."



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





Ann and her husband Les

Ann Turner has been caring for her husband, Les, since he had two major strokes in 2010. "I always remember talking with the consultant. He sat me down and said: 'Your husband will be disabled for the rest of his life.' It was a shock at first, but the conversation really brought it home to me and helped me prepare.

"Our main goal was to get Les to be able to come home, rather than go into residential care. We knew that he had to be able to walk around the flat to do that,

so the physios worked hard to help Les so he could walk with a tripod stick and a leg brace."

Thanks to the support Ann and Les received in hospital, they've been able to adapt. "We moved to a ground floor flat, which is easier for both of us. Life has changed but there's plenty to enjoy.

"We now have two grandsons. The eldest is six, so has only known Les as he is now. He's so helpful when he stays with us. He helps me to get Les dressed and wants to get involved, which is lovely."

Say **thank you** to your wedding guests in a meaningful way with our new **wedding favours**

Whether you're acknowledging a recovery, remembering someone close to you or simply celebrating the start of married life – our wedding favours are the perfect finishing touch to your special day.

Every wedding favour sold will help us raise the vital funds needed to rebuild more lives after stroke.

Stroke
Association

Shop our wedding favours at
stroke.org.uk/weddings





Save energy and reduce your bills




Keeping your home comfortable and your energy bills low can be a balancing act. But it's surprising how much you can achieve by making a few easy adjustments to your home and daily habits.


We're working with British Gas to ensure people affected by stroke can get the support they need to manage their utility bills. Here, they share some ideas for improving your energy efficiency to help save you money:


 **Turn off the lights** whenever you leave a room. Fitting energy efficient bulbs can also help you save about £40 a year on electricity bills.

 **Unplug your phone, tablet or laptop chargers** when you're not using them, so you're not paying money for wasted energy.


 **Switch off your TV** and other appliances when you're not using them. Try not to leave them on standby as they're still using energy.

Did you know? UK households waste around £30 a year powering appliances they're not using.


 **Move your furniture,** including sofas, a couple of inches away from radiators. This improves air circulation and enables the heat to reach and warm up your room much faster.

 **Close your curtains or blinds** in the evening to keep the warmth in.


 **Fit foil panels.** It's surprisingly easy to add reflector panels behind your radiators to bounce more of the heat rays back into your room, so less warmth gets lost through the wall.

 **Re-set your heating controls** or radiator valves, so you only heat the rooms you're using.

 Our Stroke Helpline can now directly refer British Gas customers to the British Gas Customer Care Team for support with their utilities, access to energy saving information and products, and financial aid. Some of these services are available to people who aren't British Gas customers too, so our Helpline can also direct you to where you can get information about the support and grants available to you.

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

 Learn more about the extra support services available to British Gas customers at **britishgas.co.uk/Priority-Service-Register**.

 You can also watch our recent UK Stroke Assembly webinar on 'Managing finances after stroke' at **stroke.org.uk/UKSA20-4**.

Puzzles

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

Word search

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

Hope
Glimmer
Helpline
Tribute
Carer

Challenge
Plan
Warm
Home
Virtual

Across

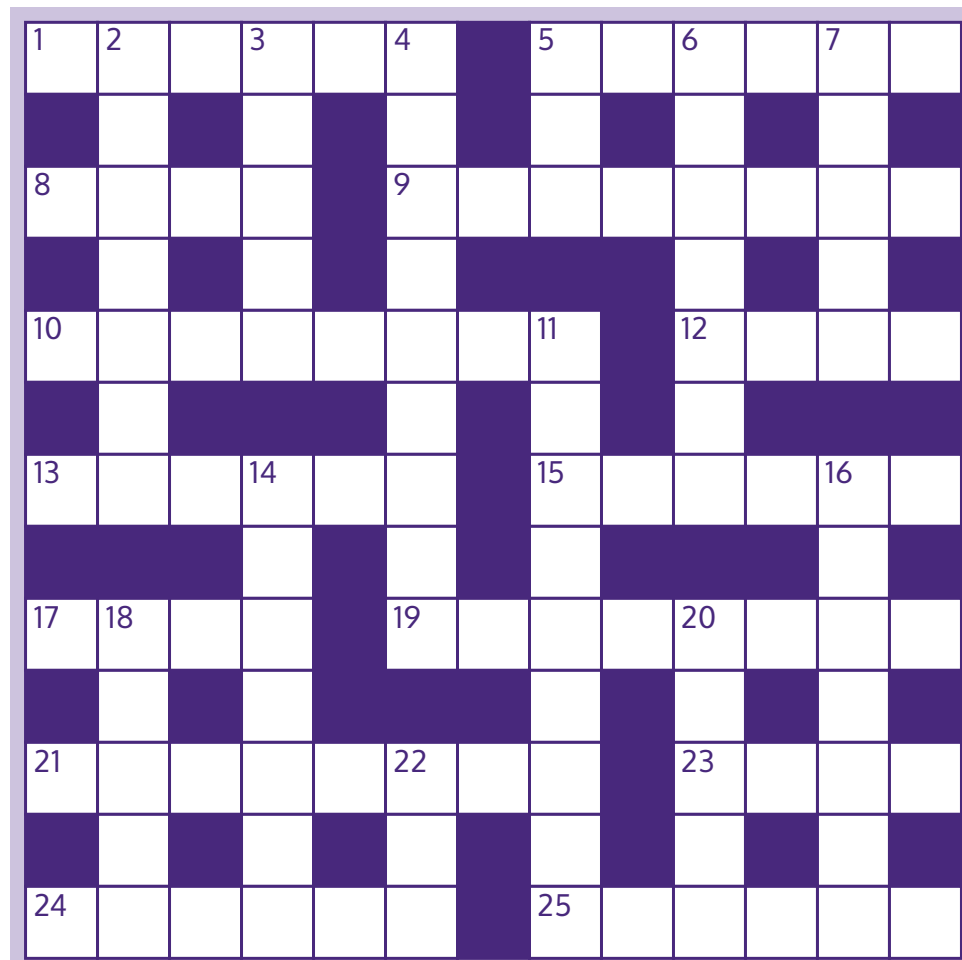
- 1 Plot, systematic plan (6)
- 5 Involving magical powers (6)
- 8 Betting system (4)
- 9 British money (8)
- 10 Chinese; official (8)
- 12 Shore foam (4)
- 13 Like a duck's feet (6)
- 15 An agreement by states (6)
- 17 Joke (4)
- 19 Type of state (8)
- 21 Domestic support (4,4)
- 23 Copy; bed (4)
- 24 Banknote (6)
- 25 Cause continuing annoyance (6)

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

- 2 Stately hymn tune (7)
- 3 Correct and revise (text) (5)
- 4 1969 road movie (4,5)
- 5 Unit (3)
- 6 Keyboard instrument (7)
- 7 Of the moon (5)
- 11 Writing material (9)
- 14 In the period separating (two events) (7)
- 16 Of little importance (7)
- 18 Run away to marry (5)
- 20 Breakfast meat (5)
- 22 Make a mistake (3)



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

Solutions
see page 38

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.

Golfing champions

Thank you to our golfing champions around the UK, who've taken up their clubs to support us. Among them were Kelly Hawkins and her family, who organised a golf day and auction in memory of their dad and raised £3,027. Matt Watts also set up a crazy golf course as part of our



Stroke Sixes challenge, raising £324. If you'd like to take part, visit stroke.org.uk/sixes or call **0300 3300 740**.

Steve D'Arcy

Well done to Steve D'Arcy from Yeovil, who took on a 24 hour gaming marathon challenge, raising £335 for us. Steve had a stroke when he was 36. He always had a passion for gaming and despite losing the use of his right arm, taught himself how to play using his one hand and chin.



Credit: Len Copland



Find out what events we've got coming up on page 36 or make a donation at stroke.org.uk/donating.

How does your donation help?



£10 could help us provide group support to stroke survivors, giving them confidence for their recovery.



£25 could help someone find hope through a call to our Helpline, providing them with the emotional support they need to adapt to life after stroke.



£50 could help fund critical research that facilitates life-changing discoveries to help support people to rebuild their lives after stroke.



Andrew Wright

Congratulations to Andrew Wright from Edinburgh, who completed his Stride for Stroke challenge, walking 1.2 million steps in 72 days, covering over 661 miles. Andrew raised over £500 in memory of his dad who passed away from a stroke.



Volunteer spotlight

Danny Lloyd, from Bristol, became a Stroke Ambassador in 2019.

"The Stroke Association have helped me understand myself as well as stroke more generally, so I was pleased to have the opportunity to give something back," said Danny.

"I raise awareness about stroke in my community. I talk about prevention based on my own lived experiences.

"People don't understand stroke or that it can happen to them. I know how much of an impact it can have on someone's life, so I'm keen to ensure that people are aware of stroke and how to reduce their risk."

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

Dates for your diary



Last chance to order Christmas cards

16 December 2020

Visit stroke.org.uk/Christmas or call **0300 3300 740** to order your Christmas cards and gifts.

2021 Christmas card competition deadline

6 March 2021

Enter your artwork for a chance to see your design on our Christmas cards next year. Visit stroke.org.uk/cardcomp21 or call **01604 687 775** to find out more.

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:

Walk Your Marathon

Challenge yourself to walk 26.2 miles – a marathon distance, in your own time, at your own pace: stroke.org.uk/walk or call **0300 3300 740**.

Choose your challenge

Whether you're a baker, a cyclist, a runner or something else – choose the challenge that's right for you: stroke.org.uk/fundraising or call **0300 3300 740**.

For more events and ways to get involved in our work, see stroke.org.uk or call **0300 3300 740**.

Crossword solution

Across: 1 Scheme; 5 Occult; 8 Tote; 9 Sterling; 10 Mandarin; 12 Surf; 13 Webbed; 15 Treaty; 17 Jest; 19 Republic; 21 Home help; 23 Crib; 24 Tenner; 25 Rankle

Down: 2 Chorale; 3 Emend; 4 Easy Rider; 5 One; 6 Celeste; 7 Lunar; 11 Notepaper; 14 Between; 16 Trivial; 18 Elope; 20 Bacon; 22 Err

