Finding a voice again

Graeme is 42 and a father of three. He had a severe stroke while taking part in a triathlon with a friend in June 2015.

He was diagnosed with a left-sided brain haemorrhage and his family were told there was no way of knowing whether he would walk or talk again.

After his stroke, Graeme’s speech was extremely limited, his mobility was affected and he was unable to use his right arm.

Following intensive speech and language therapy, and a lot of hard work and determination, Graeme is now back at work, in the same job as an IT Manager.

He has also been able to enjoy running again. He recently completed our Edinburgh Resolution Run, where his family and friends were happy to congratulate him at the finish line.

Visit stroke.org.uk/lostforwords to hear from people affected by stroke talk about finding their voice again, and share to help us raise awareness.

“My speech was the biggest thing to happen to me. I couldn’t face not being able to speak properly ever again. Just chatting to family and friends was a struggle.”
We’ve teamed up with Haven Holidays to offer those affected by stroke additional discounts on family holidays and short breaks.

Haven’s 36 holiday parks are nestled in beautiful coastal locations around the UK, right next to some of Britain’s best beaches, making their holidays perfect for fun family getaways or relaxing breaks.

Whatever the weather, there’s something for everyone: fantastic entertainment, plenty of green open spaces and facilities including heated pools, activities and children’s play areas.

You can stay in one of Haven’s luxury caravans with that ‘home from home’ feeling, bring your own to enjoy the landscaped camping areas, or try glamping instead.

Call Haven today on 0333 202 5423 and quote CH_STROKEASSOC or visit haven.com/strokeassoc to save up to an additional 10% on Haven’s best public prices.+

Their dedicated 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.*

Who’s your perfect holiday companion? For the chance to win a short break at one of Haven’s parks in spring 2018, share with us who you’d most like to go on holiday with and why.

It could be a family member, friend or even someone famous! To enter, send the name of your ideal companion and why you’d choose them to partnercomp@haven.com by 9 February 2018. **

Calls to 0333 numbers are charged at standard UK rates and will be included in any inclusive minute bundles. Head to our website for full details of your additional discount and monthly offers.

*Haven will pay the charitable contribution of 5% of your accommodation price (excluding extras) to Stroke Association Trading limited which donates its taxable profits to the Stroke Association - Charity Number 211015 England and Wales, SC037789 Scotland. See stroke.org.uk/haven for more details.

** For competition terms and conditions see: haven.com/strokeassoc
Our UK Stroke Club Conference

Thank you to all of the club and group representatives who attended our UK Stroke Club Conference last month, and made it our biggest and most successful conference yet!

Over 180 stroke survivors, carers and volunteers representing 87 stroke clubs and groups from across the UK gathered together on 29-30 September at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham. Guests gained a wealth of ideas, information, peer support, friendship and inspiration across the two days.

One of the highlights was the opening talk from Tom Solomon, Professor of Neurology at the University of Liverpool and author of Roald Dahl’s Marvellous Medicine. He gave a fascinating talk about Roald Dahl’s links with the Stroke Association and how The BFG was inspired by his wife’s communication difficulties after her stroke.

After dinner, there was a great performance by members of stroke choirs, demonstrating how those with aphasia can gain so much from being part of a stroke choir.

Day two followed with a great variety of workshops and exhibition displays, lead by a team of stroke and community experts who shared tips on how to welcome and support new members, advice on sharing the load when running a group, and facilitated hands on activities including golf, felt making and clay.

Juliet Bouverie, our CEO, gave the closing speech and summarised the event perfectly, saying: "Volunteering and peer support are so important in improving recovery, health and wellbeing. And it’s fun!"

Photos, presentations and information from the event is available at stroke.org.uk/uksc.

Why not share these with your group and inspire others at your next meeting?
Our national plan for stroke

NHS England has agreed to work with us to seek to develop a national plan for stroke to build on the successes of the National Stroke Strategy.

We’re absolutely delighted with this news which is a direct result of all of our hard work campaigning for A New Era for Stroke, and we couldn’t have done it without you and our partners. We want to thank each and every one of you who’ve helped us during the campaign, whether it be signing our petition or contacting your local MP.

Now we need to make sure the plan we are working on reflects stroke survivors and carers priorities for stroke care. To do this, we gathered feedback in a survey and spoke to many of you at the UK Stroke Club Conference. Thank you to everyone who completed our survey and told us your views. We’re collating your views and will make sure they are considered when developing the national plan.

We’ll update you on our progress, and next year we’ll be letting you know how you can help us to promote our national plan for stroke.

If you want to be the first to know about our latest campaign updates and actions you can take to support our work further, join our Campaigns Network.

You can sign-up for email updates here, stroke.org.uk/webform/join-campaigns-network.

Spotlight on Speakability

We’ve been working hard over the last year to make sure Speakability groups are welcomed and integrated into the Stroke Association.

Speakability self-help groups are specifically set up and designed to support people with aphasia, and members have a wealth of knowledge and experience in this area.

Aphasia can be one of the most debilitating effects of a stroke and other neurological illnesses. We’re proud to welcome Speakability groups into our charity to strengthen our support for those with aphasia, and because they’re a great asset to us.

There are currently 33 Speakability groups across England and Scotland who are joining our charity, and we’d like say a warm welcome to each and every group, volunteer and member.

You can find further information on Speakability groups in your area at stroke.org.uk/clubs

Burton upon Trent group
New handbook

We’ve updated our Stroke Association Voluntary Group handbook and are pleased to share it with our voluntary groups. It’s much nicer to use and a lot more accessible, and instead of having three versions of the handbook separated by country, there is now one version for all of the UK.

The new version:
• has the most up-to-date processes and advice for our voluntary groups;
• is more attractive, using images and colour throughout;
• has less pages of text;
• and includes helpful top-tips and advice.

We’ll send a printed copy of the new handbook to each of our Stroke Association Voluntary Groups in the winter.

Updated Stroke Club Toolkit

We’ve also updated our Stroke Club Toolkit for affiliated independent stroke clubs.

It’s been updated with the latest DBS information and we’ve made better templates for your policies.

We’ve also made it more accessible by changing the wording and highlighting the information that is key.

• It now has the most up-to-date processes, templates and advice;
• has less pages of text;
• and includes helpful top-tips and advice.

And the winner is...
Swale Social Stroke Group!

Congratulations to the group on winning this year’s Make May Purple photography competition.

Our judge, Baroness Floella Benjamin, said “Make May Purple is all about having fun and raising funds for a great cause. I chose this picture because it really made me smile. Stroke can be devastating, but it is heart-warming to see the Swale Social Stroke Group looking on the bright side and going the extra mile to raise awareness. I hope that many other clubs and groups get creative and take part in Make May Purple next year.”

Have fun and raise funds so that we can support more survivors to live independently. We cannot do what we do without you.

Register to get a Make May Purple fundraising pack at stroke.org.uk/makemaypurple.

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New handbook

This year seems to have flown by and the nights are drawing in, so that means it’s time to start planning ahead for the next big celebration... no, not Christmas, we mean Make May Purple for Stroke!

Next May, raise money by wearing purple, and dare your friends and families to wear something purple too! Remember to share your efforts with us on social media.

Whether you go purple for a day, a week or the whole month, the money you raise will make a big difference.

Have fun and raise funds so that we can support more survivors to live independently. We cannot do what we do without you.

Register to get a Make May Purple fundraising pack at stroke.org.uk/makemaypurple.

Make May Purple for Stroke

New handbook

Updated Stroke Club Toolkit

And the winner is...
Swale Social Stroke Group!
Regional News

A marvellous May!

This year’s Make May Purple was one of the biggest yet, with so many people and places turning purple in support. Thank you so much to everyone who got involved!

The month got off to a wonderful start with our Step Out for Stroke event in Broughty Ferry. We were delighted to organise this event with the support of the Tayside Speakability group for the second year running. The beach esplanade never looked so purple and thankfully the sun shone on us all. Thank you to everyone who took part and helped out on the day!

The Perth Speakability group got the papers talking when they displayed their artwork at the Royal George Hotel in Perth. One paper quoted ‘remarkable paintings by remarkable people’ - we couldn’t agree more!

Thank you to everyone who donated artwork and helped to organise the event.

Digital support

We have a partnership with Barclays Bank and their staff, known as Digital Eagles, train and volunteer to deliver soft technical support within their community.

The My Stroke Guide Drop In café in Dumbarton recently had the support from a Digital Eagle who provided help and information to people to improve their safety knowledge of using the internet, and help with using smartphone technology. Participants also used My Stroke Guide during the drop in, and shared their knowledge of the guide with others.

If you would like a Digital Eagle to visit your group, please call 020 7566 1540 or email us at clubtogether@stroke.org.uk.

Would you like to share your story?

Stroke awareness is poor in Scotland, despite it being the fourth biggest killer in the UK and leading cause of disability. We need people to know that a stroke can happen to anyone, at any time. We also want people to know stroke is preventable.

We’d like to hear from you if you have experience of stroke and are willing to share your story in the media. You support is invaluable and will greatly increase the chance of people taking action on stroke.

Please email Angela.Macleod@stroke.org.uk or call 0131 555 7244 if you have a story to tell.
Stroke Ambassador training comes to NI

This month, we held our first Stroke Ambassador training session in Northern Ireland.

Our Stroke Ambassadors help us to share key awareness and prevention messages and they campaign on our behalf.

If you would like to become a Stroke Ambassador or know someone who would, please contact janice.kirkpatrick@stroke.org.uk.

Sky high for Bangor

Stroke survivors Steve Wylie and Lorraine McGivern who attend our Bangor Group have raised an incredible £2,770 by taking part in a brave skydive.

All money raised will go towards the Bangor Stroke Support Group, who rely on public donations to support local stroke survivors. Thank you, Steve and Lorraine!

Our partnership with Rotary and Irish Heart

Last month, we relaunched our exciting partnership with Rotary Ireland and Irish Heart. We are encouraging Rotary clubs across Ireland to host Know Your Blood Pressure checks.
Reading Well book list

We have recently endorsed a new book list for people living with long-term conditions and their carers.

Developed by The Reading Agency and the Society of Chief Librarians in partnership with charity and expert partners, the book list aims to help people better understand and self-manage their long-term conditions, including stroke.

One book on the list is ‘Rebuilding your life after stroke’ by Reg Morris, Malin Falck, Tamsin Miles, Julie Wilcox and Sam Fisher-Hicks, for which our CEO, Juliet Bouverie, has written the foreword. We also had the book reviewed by Louise Clark who is a specialist in stroke and Head of Occupational Therapy at Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Other books cover topics including sex and relationships, knowing your rights, and mental health and wellbeing.

To find out more about Reading Well and the book list, visit: readingagency.org.uk/adults/quick-guides/reading-well