

Club Together

Issue 50: Summer 2018

Wales

Independence matters

Our charity supports stroke survivors to **regain their independence** and help get their lives back on track. Our peer support network is a big part of this, and can be an **instrumental tool in a stroke survivor's recovery**.

For many stroke survivors, their recovery means adjusting to **life-changing disabilities and emotional difficulties**.

Our latest campaign, **'Independence doesn't happen on your own'**, aims to help more people to **understand how stroke can affect people** and raise awareness of how our charity can offer **support and information** about life after stroke.

And here's why:

- In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, **84% of patients** leave hospital requiring help with their daily living activities.

- In Scotland, **more than half of stroke survivors** need assistance from another person to be able to walk.

Last year, we provided emotional, practical and peer support to **57,000 stroke survivors** and their loved ones through our face-to-face services. We supported **15,000 people** through our helpline and almost **6,000** through our stroke peer support groups. And, over **1,100** people were supported by our Life After Stroke Grants.

Many of these services are only possible thanks to the **generosity of our supporters**, who enable us to **continue to support stroke survivors across the UK**.

With your help and more awareness, we want to **share information about what support is available after stroke** and help stroke survivors **regain their independence**.

Find out more on our website: stroke.org.uk/independence.

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Together we can conquer stroke

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When is it safe to fly after a stroke?

We work with AllClear Travel* who have given their tips on how to fly with confidence after a stroke.

Most medical professionals agree that if you've had a stroke, you **should not fly for a minimum of two weeks**, and in more severe cases, for **up to three months**.

Understandably, there is no exact rule for everyone, and you should **always confirm with your doctor that you're fit to travel**. But, there are further steps you can take to make you **more confident when travelling by air**.

Five tips for flying after a stroke

The main risk of flying after a stroke is **developing blood clots**, especially clots in your legs. Consider the following steps to **prevent blood clots**:

1. Book an aisle seat

Stretching out your legs is important.

2. Flight socks

They improve blood circulation by applying pressure.

3. Wear loose-fitting clothes

They ensure blood flow is not restricted.

4. Exercise

Walk around regularly and stretch, even while seated.

5. Fluids

Drink lots of water, and avoid alcohol, as it can cause your blood to thicken.

Medical travel insurance

Sometimes you can prepare perfectly and still be unlucky. **Medical costs for a stroke can be extremely expensive** - particularly when visiting the USA.

Make sure you have **comprehensive travel insurance** to give you extra peace of mind while travelling.

To get a quote or purchase **specialist medical travel insurance** with AllClear, please visit stroke.org.uk/allclear or call for free on **0808 168 8733** today.

*When you purchase a policy from AllClear Travel, they will make a contribution of up to 20% of your premium to the Stroke Association (excluding Insurance Premium Tax) at no additional cost to you. The Stroke Association is an Introducer Appointed Representative of AllClear Insurance Services Limited. AllClear Insurance Services Limited, registered in England No. 4255112. Registered Office: AllClear House, 1 Redwing Court, Ashton Road, Romford, RM3 8QQ. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority firm reference number 311244. AllClear is a registered trademark

Give a Hand and Bake 22 - 28 October

Last year was fantastic - full of baking, fundraising and connecting with friends and family over a cup of tea and a slice.



Plans are well underway in our fundraising department, and we are almost ready to share our fundraising pack that will launch on **30 August**, full of tips and hints on how to make your baking event a sweet delight.

To tickle your taste buds, we wanted to share a delicious cake that is **low in sugar, and gluten free**, which went down a real treat in one of our local offices last year.

We hope you will join us in baking up a storm this October, so that we can support more stroke survivors and their families through My Stroke Guide.

Ingredients for one cake:

- ½ cup (2¾ oz) unsweetened dark cocoa powder
- ½ cup (2¾ oz) coconut flour
- 2½ tsp gluten free baking powder
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- Pinch of sea salt
- 6 organic eggs
- ½ cup honey, maple syrup or your choice of sweetener
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup coconut milk
- 1 tsp vanilla bean paste

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C
2. Sift the cocoa, coconut flour, baking powder, cinnamon and sea salt into a mixing bowl.
3. Add the eggs, honey, vanilla, coconut milk and olive oil.
4. Mix well until smooth and combined – a whisk works well.
5. Pour into a 20 cm (9 inch) baking tin lined with baking paper.
6. Bake for 55-60 minutes or until cooked through. Best to test after 45 mins to make sure as oven temps may vary.
7. Remove from the oven and cool.

Inspired ideas

Now that the weather is warm and the flowers are blooming, why not bring some of the outdoors inside? **Indoor gardening** has a host of benefits, from enhanced well being, improved hand coordination, relaxation, a chance for people to work together and catch-up at the same time and a feeling of satisfaction as you see the results of your work.

You will need:

- Tables covered with plastic or old newspapers for protection.
- Some tools, potting mixture, pebbles, honey, pots and water.
- Succulent leaves, bulbs or cuttings.

Propagate succulents

Bring in some cuttings of succulents or leaves that have dropped off the plant. To propagate, lay the succulent leaves flat on top of the dry mix and place in bright, indirect light. Lightly mist the cuttings once a week at your meetings. Roots will soon emerge as the leaf looks for water.

Succulents are very versatile, but don't like being too wet. Place them in partly shaded spots when growing and water only when dried.

Plant indoor bulbs

Spring bulbs are easy to grow and should bloom every time. Go for hyacinth, narcissus and amaryllis bulbs and place on window sills or other sunny areas. Place pebbles inside a container and arrange a few bulbs, (or just one bulb if the container is small) root side down, so that the pebbles cover half of the bulbs. Put a small amount of water in the container, just enough to touch the root of the bulbs.

Grow from cuttings

Geraniums are sturdy plants, and fragrant and beautiful. Take your cutting and cut it below the growth nodule. Next, take the leaves and flower buds out leaving only the smallest leaves attached. To boost growth, dip ends in honey and plant in potting mixture. You should water the pots once a week. Happy planting!

Our Policy and Influencing teams special thank you

Thank you to everyone who supported our **A New Era for Stroke** campaign. We're pleased to share that NHS England have agreed to work with us on developing a new national plan for stroke. We could not have done it without you.

We're working with NHS England and others from across the health system, to finalise the new national plan for stroke in England. The new plan will look across the **whole stroke pathway**, from the **moment stroke strikes** to support after **leaving hospital**, and suggest improvements.

This is a **huge step forward for our campaign** but we aren't done yet. We now need to ensure that the plan covers the **important issues** for stroke survivors, and that it will be **implemented locally**, where stroke survivors and their families tell us they need them.

The success of the campaign would not have happened without your help. Your commitment, passion and dedication helped us convince the **government** and **NHS England** that a new stroke plan is needed.

Everything you did helped us to achieve our goal of securing a national plan for stroke and a **better future for stroke survivors**.

To celebrate your involvement, we held **three thank you events**, and several **clubs and groups** also held their own **thank you tea parties**.

If you would like to get involved, or would like more information, please get in touch with us by email at campaigns@stroke.org.uk.

Thank you again, for not only all that you have done, but all that we know you will continue to do to show that **together we can conquer stroke**.



Celebrating volunteers



What volunteering means to you

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For **Volunteers' Week 2018**, we asked what volunteering means to you, and the results were really nice to see.

The word cloud above shows the words that we were sent. The purple words represent the largest amount of responses, with yellow showing the next amount and blue the smallest.

As you can see, the responses were all very positive. It's wonderful to see what volunteering means to you, and thank you for getting involved.

This year we shared a series of blogs on our intranet, and for the first time, on our website. If you haven't read them yet, visit stroke.org.uk/volunteering and find the 'Additional links' area to meet our volunteers.

There are some wonderful stories and we've had great feedback about them. We would love to continue sharing what our volunteers do this way throughout the year.

If you'd like to write a blog, please email clubtogether@stroke.org.uk and we can support you.



Our 2018 UKSCC

This year's **UK Stroke Club Conference** takes place on **Friday 28 – Saturday 29 September** at the **East Midlands Conference Centre**.

Invitations will be posted to the main contact of clubs and groups in **early July** with full details of the event. Places are limited, so book yours by the **end of August** to guarantee your place.

At the UKSCC, you can join other group representatives to **hear the latest news from the stroke community, gain ideas and tips about running a group** and learn from other groups from across the UK.

Jane Malone, pictured below, organiser for **Warwick and Leamington Stroke Support Group** attended the conference.

"We attended the Stroke Club Conference in Nottingham in 2017. It was great, well organised, informative and very much enjoyed by three of our members who attended."

There are always new things to learn and useful information to help our groups to thrive."

The programme consists of **talks, workshops, an exhibition** and plenty of **time to network** with others.

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



Meet our new Community Steps team

Community Steps will create support services for stroke survivors in communities across Wales, integrate them in to existing services and ensure their needs are considered when local organisations and decision makers are creating or changing local facilities and activities.

Hi, I'm **Lauren**, Volunteering and Community Steps Officer for South East Wales, including Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. I've worked for our charity for two years as a coordinator for the Phoenix Project in Wales, which offers longer term communication support and back to work support for stroke survivors of working age. I came from a third sector background prior to this, working on projects to reduce social isolation. I'm looking forward to making communities stroke aware and friendly, and providing opportunities for stroke survivors that helps them to enjoy their life after stroke.



Hi, my name is **Julie**. I'm Volunteering and Community Steps Officer for West Wales, covering Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. I've lived and worked in Wales for 11 years now but am originally from Hastings in Sussex. Before moving to Wales, I was with the Probation Service as part of the Community Payback scheme for 14 years. Since moving to Wales, I have worked for the NHS, a social housing provider, and more recently for the British Red Cross until joining the charity in April.

I'm **India**. I am the Community Steps Administrator for the whole of Wales. I've already supported **Know Your Blood Pressure** events, as well as the local **Resolution Run**. I've lived in North Wales all my life. I worked in the tourist industry from a young age. I am bilingual and will attempt to speak Welsh where possible. I enjoy the simple things in life so it takes very little to make me smile. The place you're most likely to find me is the zoo, as I love walking around learning about all the animals around the globe.



My name is **Caroline** and I cover Monmouthshire, Powys and Wrexham. Previously, I trained as a social worker and got involved in the delivery of adult social care so I've been involved in designing services and facilities with stroke survivors and their family carers before. Recently, I've visited stroke cafés and clubs to get to know people, and to learn about the current range of support services. I've talked with stroke survivors, volunteers and staff about the activities people would like to see developed through the community steps project, and this will generate lots of ideas.

My name is **Colin**. I am your Community Steps officer covering Gwynedd, Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire. I have been visiting a number of my local groups and for those I haven't yet, I hope to visit very soon. I've worked in the third sector for the last decade or so, and immediately prior to joining our charity, I was employed at a couple of charities working in the fields of tinnitus, hearing loss and deafness. Out of work, my main hobby is travel, which has taken me to many wild and wonderful places over the years.



A big welcome to our new Director, Margaret Street

"Hello! I'm really excited to be joining the Stroke Association team in Wales. My previous work was with a charity that helps people have a voice in shaping the health and social care support they receive. I'm really looking forward to working with stroke survivors and their carers in helping to make Wales a nation at the forefront of stroke prevention and recovery."

Margaret has already met many stroke survivors and supporters in the first three months of being in post, including those at **Step Out Bridgend**, a **Strike a Chord** concert in Cwmbran and a volunteer-led **Rhuddlan** stroke group.

She recently attended the **Stroke Assembly UK** in Manchester, where she listened to inspiring and thought-provoking messages from stroke survivors about their experiences and hopes for the future.

"Hearing the stories of people affected by stroke directly from them is very important," Margaret added. "I want to help make sure that people's voices are heard."

Margaret thinks Community Steps, aimed at supporting links between stroke survivors and their communities, will really help stroke survivors across Wales.

"Many stroke survivors have spoken of feeling isolated, especially if they have speech or mobility difficulties," she said. "This project will be a great way of bringing people together and building connections."

"I also want more people to have the best rehabilitation support, and increase awareness of how serious a stroke can be, and what people can do to reduce their risk."

Margaret completed an Open University course in Welsh language some years ago and hasn't spoken Welsh for some years, but is keen to become more confident in using the Welsh language.

"I will be practising as much as I can over the next few months - please bear with me as I relearn this lovely language. Diolch yn fawr!"

New2Golf scheme a success

Following the success of the **first golf scheme for stroke survivors** last summer in Newport, we're thrilled to announce that we have secured funding that will allow us to roll this out in **12 different locations across Wales**.

In partnership with **Golf Wales**, the funding enables us to provide a **block of 12 week sessions at no cost** at the participating golf courses, to encourage stroke survivors and their carers to take up golf. You don't have to be a seasoned putter to join, all abilities are welcome, from beginners to those who with an impressive handicap.

Most important of all, **these sessions are tailored especially for people living with disabilities**. The 'golf pro' in the selected golf clubs receives 'inclusion' training, which enables them to **tailor their coaching techniques to suit the individual**, whatever their ability.



Stroke survivors who took part last year reported **improvements in confidence, coordination and balance** as a result of taking up golf.

We are hoping to roll these schemes out in Tenby, Llanelli, Pyle, the Vale of Glamorgan, Caerphilly, Rhyl, Conwy, Porthmadog and Wrexham.

To get involved, contact your local Volunteering and Community Steps officer to find out more about this exciting scheme coming to a golf course near you!

Contacts

Contact us by email:

clubtogether@stroke.org.uk

Contact us in the region:

Caroline Byrt

Monmouthshire, Powys and
Wrexham

Tel: 07715065923

caroline.byrt@stroke.org.uk

Colin Evans

Gwynedd, Conwy, Anglesey,
Denbighshire and Flintshire

Tel: 07984357191

colin.evans@stroke.org.uk

Julie Price

Camarthenshire, Ceredigion
and Pembrokeshire

Tel: 07717275765

julie.price@stroke.org.uk

Lauren Heath

South East Wales including
Swansea and Neath Port
Talbot

Tel: 07932265274

lauren.heath@stroke.org.uk

Contact us nationally:

Claire Riley

240 City Road
London

EC1V 2PR

Tel: 0207 566 1540

claire.riley@stroke.org.uk

Step Out for Stroke



Our Step Out events here in Wales were an amazing success.

Bridgend was the first of the summer and the turn out was fantastic.

There was a wonderful sense of **community spirit** and **fantastic support** from staff and volunteers.

Our second walk was our first time in **Aberavon**. The event was a partnership event with **Neath Port Talbot** and **3 Crosses Stroke Clubs**.

Once again, the sun was shining and we had brilliant support from the **clubs and groups, staff** and **volunteers**.

The next Step Out for Stroke events are:

- **Bryn Bach Park**
Saturday 7 July
- **Llandudno**
Sunday 22 July

We hope to see you there!

Calendar

Dates for your diary...

Saturday 7 July

Bryn Bach Step Out for Stroke

Sunday 22 July

Llandudno Step Out for Stroke

Monday 23 -

Thursday 26 July

Stand at Royal Welsh Show

Saturday 28 -

Sunday 29 September

UK Stroke Club Conference
East Midlands Conference
Centre, Nottingham

Sunday 7 October

Cardiff Half Marathon