

Lived Experience of Stroke

Chapter 1 Hidden Effects of Stroke

Rebuilding lives after stroke

Cymdeithas
Strôc | **Stroke**
Association

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Introduction

A stroke happens in the brain, the control centre for who we are and what we can do. Each year around 7,400 people will have a stroke in Wales and there are almost 70,000 stroke survivors living in Wales.

In 2018 we conducted the biggest ever survey of stroke survivors and their carers' in the UK. In

Wales more than 600 people closely affected by stroke completed the survey.

94% of stroke survivors in Wales said they had at least one cognitive effect from their stroke; meaning something that is not immediately obvious such as changes in emotions or mental health.

Findings

In Wales;

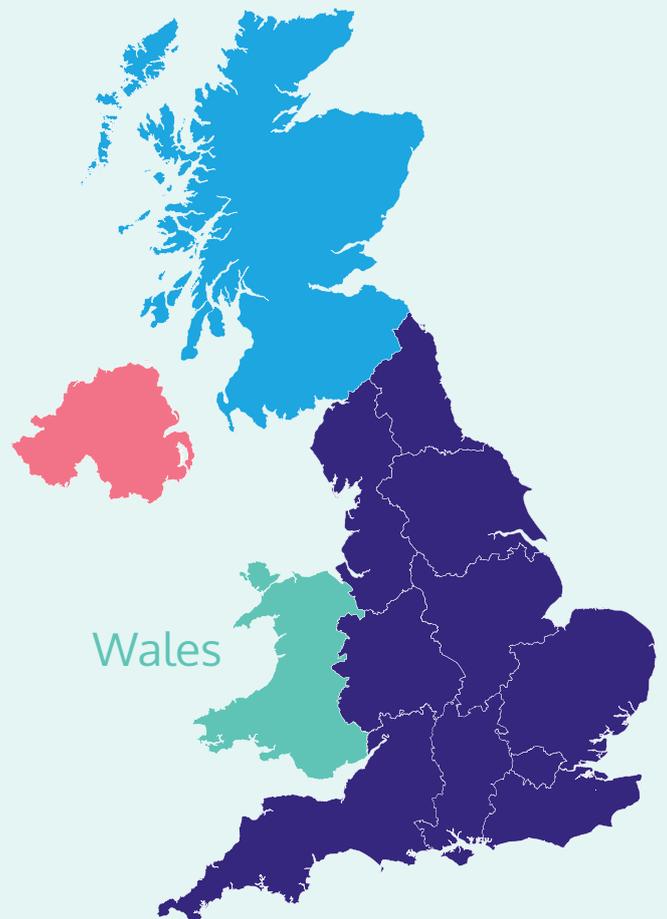
Fatigue is the most common, experienced by 85% of survey respondents. Unlike normal tiredness fatigue doesn't get better with rest; people often lack the physical or mental energy to take part in everyday activities.

81% of stroke survivors told us they have problems with their memory.

79% of stroke survivors reported problems with concentration. This could include being unable to follow a television programme or read a book.

76% of stroke survivors experienced mental health issues following their stroke, including a lack of confidence, anxiety, depression, mood swings or suicidal thoughts.

With time, courage and the right support, stroke survivors begin to feel better. 96% of people told us they feel like they are on the road to recovery.





Gary's story

Gary Scott from Swansea was just 26 when a stroke left him with severe fatigue and emotional challenges.

The former bus driver from Swansea said: "I felt depressed, was drinking too much and thought of ending things.

"If you've got problems inside your brain, others can't see it.

"Eventually I spoke to my family who helped me get counselling. I also had fantastic support from the Stroke Association coordinator and a local group of stroke survivors.

"Now I volunteer to help other people rebuild their lives after stroke."

Better support for stroke survivors

We're working with the National Assembly for Wales's Cross Party Group on Stroke to scrutinise delivery of the Stroke Delivery Plan, to ensure it meets the needs of stroke survivors and their carers in Wales.

Life after stroke, including hidden effects, will be a key focus of this work.

To find out more about our work in Wales visit stroke.org.uk/wales, follow us on Twitter @StrokeWales or like us on Facebook/StrokeAssociationWales
