



# International Strategy 2019-24

**Stroke**  
Association



# 1. Why do we want to engage internationally?

## Our vision

Our vision is for there to be fewer strokes, and for people affected by stroke to get the help they need to live the best life they can. Stroke affects people in every country across the globe. It is the second leading cause of death worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Globally, one in four people over the age of 25 will have a stroke in their lifetime.<sup>2</sup>

## The barriers at a global level

The profile of stroke and research investment are disproportionate to that of conditions with a comparable burden, both in the UK and worldwide.

80-90% of strokes are preventable, yet many people across the world are unable to access the information, treatment and support that they need to prevent avoidable strokes and to make the best possible recovery after a stroke. A lack of awareness of stroke and its impact can result in stigma and discrimination, which further exacerbates the global stroke burden.

## Our expertise

We are the UK's single biggest stroke charity and a leading stroke support organisation (SSO)<sup>i</sup> globally. We have extensive experience in stroke support and in policy and influencing. We have established a strong stroke research and professional community, which includes effective patient engagement. This expertise gives us an authoritative voice in calling for the fulfilment of the Global Stroke Bill of Rights.<sup>ii</sup>

## The European and international context

Continuing to engage internationally will become increasingly important following the UK's planned exit from the European Union, to ensure we are establishing and maintaining appropriate links. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are now part of the global health and development agenda, in the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and in the World Health Organization Global Action Plan for Prevention and Control of NCDs. As a significant proportion of the global NCD burden can be attributed to stroke, our work is firmly placed within a global cause.



<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. (2018) The top 10 causes of death. Available at: [www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/the-top-10-causes-of-death](http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/the-top-10-causes-of-death). Last accessed 26 April 2019

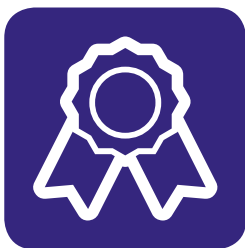
<sup>2</sup> V. Feigin et al. Global, Regional, and Country-Specific Lifetime Risks of Stroke, 1990 and 2016. New England Journal of Medicine 2018;379:2429-2437

## 2. How will we engage internationally?

This strategy will ensure that our international engagement is two-way, bringing benefits to people affected by stroke in the UK, as well as to those across the world. We will promote flagship examples of SSO best practice where they exist, whether within our own products and services, or those of other SSOs worldwide. We will optimise opportunities to leverage our relationships with the World Stroke Organization (WSO), Stroke Alliance for Europe (SAFE)<sup>iii</sup> and our international network of researchers, SSOs, and medical professionals, in order to share evidence based policy and practice, to raise our profile and to identify funding opportunities.

We will ensure that the importance of issues and challenges faced by people affected by stroke, and in the development and implementation of policy and practice in the UK, are elevated and recognised at a global level. This includes promoting the importance of meaningful engagement of people affected by stroke in research, policy, and practice development, highlighting the evidence that this engagement can lead to better outcomes. We will learn from global exemplars of policy and practice through our participation in international conferences, networks and bilateral discussions, to help us to do our job better on a national and local level.

## 3. Our goals



Stroke patients, survivors and their carers access the support they need through empowered SSOs across the globe.



The profile of stroke is raised at the international level and across low and middle income countries.



Bring benefits to people affected by stroke in the UK through our position as a leading SSO in the global community.

## 4. Our expected outcomes

### Knowledge exchange

More SSOs are established; they are delivering quality services and are engaged in advocacy.

- We will support the development of new SSOs globally, continue to lead knowledge exchange activities and enable access to best practice examples of stroke support and advocacy.
- We will promote international best practice models and learning opportunities within the Stroke Association.
- In partnership with WSO and SAFE, we will develop stroke support and advocacy resources, ensuring involvement, engagement, collaboration and co-production with people affected by stroke.

### Building Relationships

More organisations are engaged with the Stroke Association as a UK stakeholder in the global NCD agenda.

- We will engage with UK groups and networks focused on the global NCD agenda, to raise awareness of our role within this, and where appropriate we will add our voice to NCD advocacy. This engagement will focus on ensuring stroke remains visible within these forums.
- We will facilitate stronger connections between academic researchers focusing on improving stroke care in low and middle income countries, and link them to our international SSO network.



Photo credit: Acha Memorial Foundation Nigeria.



## Raising the profile of stroke

More people are engaged with stroke as a cause internationally, and with SSOs as key stakeholders.

- We will ensure SSO sessions remain a part of international stroke conferences, and we will continue to use this platform to showcase the importance of our work.
- We will promote the World Stroke Campaign, annual World Stroke Day and European Stroke Awareness Day, and include UK-relevant messages.
- We will ensure issues affecting stroke survivors in the UK are addressed within global priorities and guidelines.
- We will explore collaborations with third sector disability, ageing and other NCD focused organisations, to raise the profile of stroke within their agendas.

## Convening

Leverage funding for stroke research, and the development of global best practice.

- We will identify opportunities to support and convene consortia to develop joint working, both in scientific research and the delivery of stroke support, and collaborate within our international network to both develop and adopt best practice models and guidelines.
- We will engage with research funding opportunities within global health that are driven and funded by UKRI and its partners.
- We will explore opportunities for trusts and healthcare company funding to support SSO capacity building.
- We will remain alert to opportunities that open up as a result of the UN 2030 Agenda, and highlight how our work contributes to the UK's international commitments.

## Stroke Association international engagement mechanisms

- SSOs are defined by the World Stroke Organization as non- governmental organizations that address the concerns of stroke survivors and their caregivers. At a minimum, most SSOs offer information and advice to stroke patients, but they might also provide peer support, counselling and rehabilitation. Many also engage in awareness campaigning, lobbying for better services, and funding or facilitating stroke research.
- The Global Stroke Bill of Rights identifies aspects of stroke care that are vital for all stroke survivors wherever they are in the world. [www.worldstrokecampaign.org/support-the-global-stroke-bill-of-rights.html](http://www.worldstrokecampaign.org/support-the-global-stroke-bill-of-rights.html)
- We are a member of the WSO and SAFE. WSO is the world's leading organization in the fight against stroke, with individual and society members from across the globe. Its mission is to reduce the global burden of stroke through prevention, treatment and long term care. SAFE is the European alliance of SSOs. Its mission is to work towards all patients in Europe with stroke having rights of access to a continuum of care.
  - The CEO is a member of the WSO Board and the WSO SSO Committee.
  - The International Development Manager is employed by the Stroke Association and part funded by the WSO, and leads on the global SSO capacity building and is secretary of the SSO Committee.
  - The Assistant Director of Public Relations and Communications is a member of the WSO World Stroke Campaign Working Group and has a lead role in the Stroke Association's engagement with the annual World Stroke Campaign.
  - Stroke Association delegates attend the World Stroke Congress, the European Stroke Organisation Conference and the SAFE Annual Conference. Stroke Association staff are invited to be speakers and we submit abstracts for posters and oral presentations.
  - The Stroke Association partners in and supports EU research and other international opportunities as a member of SAFE.
  - We engage with international research in stroke via the European Stroke Organisation Conference and the World Stroke Congress.
  - The Stroke Association has funded the UK arm of some international stroke research trials.

## When stroke strikes, part of your brain shuts down.

And so does a part of you. That's because a stroke happens in the brain, the control centre for who we are and what we can do. It happens every five minutes in the UK and changes lives instantly. Recovery is tough, but with the right specialist support and a ton of courage and determination, the brain can adapt. Our specialist support, research and campaigning are only possible with the courage and determination of the stroke community. With more donations and support from you, we can rebuild even more lives.

Donate or find out more at [stroke.org.uk](https://stroke.org.uk)

## Contact us

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We're here for you. Contact us for expert information and support by phone, email and online.

Stroke Helpline: **0303 3033 100**

From a textphone: **18001 0303 3033 100**

Email: [helpline@stroke.org.uk](mailto:helpline@stroke.org.uk)

Website: [stroke.org.uk](https://stroke.org.uk)

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Rebuilding lives after stroke

**Stroke**  
Association