

Quality Account 2021/2022

Stroke
Association



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Accessible summary

The Stroke Association is the UK's **leading charity** supporting people to rebuild their lives after **stroke**.

We believe everyone deserves to live the **best life** they can **after stroke**.

The Stroke Association provides **services** to **support people affected by stroke**.

This report is about our **local services** which are **funded by the NHS**.

The **quality** of our **support services** is very **important** to us.

We are **proud** of the **services** that we deliver and we know that we can **do more**.

We want to continue to **improve**.

We are committed to **listening** to people affected by stroke and **acting on feedback**.

This report is about some of the areas that we will focus on in **2022/2023** to **improve** the **quality** of our services:

Safety

By continuing to **improve** our **training systems**.

We will ensure our staff and volunteers can **access** our **new training system** and **improve** the **quality** of our training courses.

Effectiveness

By putting in place a structure to help us **improve** the **quality** of **our services** and how we measure this.

We will also improve our approach to ensuring that our services are **accessible** for **everyone**.

Experience

By **developing** and **testing** out new ways to **measure** the **difference** that **our services** make to the lives of stroke survivors.

We will use this **feedback** to **help** us to identify ways to **make** our **services better**.

Statement from CEO and Chair of Trustees

We are delighted to be sharing the Stroke Association's first Quality Account.

At the Stroke Association, we put people affected by stroke at the heart of everything we do and strive every day to provide support that meets their needs, adds value to their lives and gives them a positive experience.

We are here to ensure that everyone affected by stroke has access to the rehabilitation and lifelong support they need, whether from us or others. And our values of 'believing in better' and 'giving our all' spur us on to be proud of the support we provide, while always knowing that there's room for us to add even more value to the lives of the people we're here to serve.

Quality is central to all that we do. It is embedded throughout the direct support we provide, as well as the enabling processes and systems we have in place to ensure support is delivered in a way that's effective, safe and offers a positive experience.

We're committed to monitoring, evaluating and improving quality across our support, for stroke survivors and their families, ourselves and our funders. We strive to continuously and proactively respond to opportunities to

improve quality. We're deeply committed to ensuring that the voice of people affected by stroke is at the heart of everything that we do. We strive for genuine co-creation of ideas and actions with people affected by stroke. We want to ensure that we're listening carefully to stroke survivors and carers and to act on what people tell us.

Every spring, as a charity we plan our priorities for the year ahead and what we'll do to achieve our three strategic goals:

- Make stroke the priority it needs to be
- Ensure that everyone affected by stroke has access to the rehabilitation and lifelong support they need
- Partner with people and communities to help them take action on stroke

We are proud of the services that we deliver, but to achieve our ambitions we know that we can do more, which is why we are prioritising improving the quality of our service delivery. This is something that will remain an ongoing focus as we continually strive to do better. This quality account outlines some of the ways that we will do this throughout the coming year.

Our Locality Support Products Team has led on compiling this report. We confirm that this is an accurate account.



Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. King'.

Stephen King,
Chair of Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Juliet Bouverie'.

Juliet Bouverie,
Chief Executive

Who we are

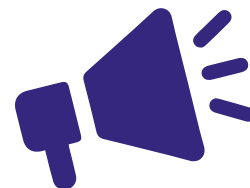
The Stroke Association is the UK's leading charity supporting people to rebuild their lives after stroke. We believe everyone deserves to live the best life they can after stroke.

Stroke strikes every five minutes. Sadly it continues to be one of the leading causes of death in the UK. It is estimated that there are around 100,000 people who have a stroke each year and there are 1.3 million stroke survivors in the UK.



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.



Our core purpose

Is to be the trusted voice of stroke survivors and their families. We want to drive better outcomes in stroke prevention, treatment and lifelong support for everyone affected by stroke.

**We are
human**

**We believe
in better**

**We give
our all**

**We say it
how it is**



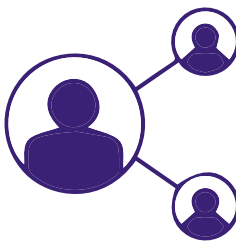
We are human

We've seen the full range of human emotions that stroke brings out. We put ourselves in the shoes of the people we support. Recognising and promoting everyone's individuality with kindness. We embrace this to achieve the best possible outcomes for stroke survivors, our charity and our partners.



We believe in better

We're optimistic for the future. For the people living through the devastating effects of stroke, ourselves and our charity. Driven by our desire for improvement, however big or small. To focus on the possibilities for a better future. To learn from mistakes. And move forward stronger than before.



We say it how it is

Working together, we set realistic but challenging goals for ourselves and the people we support. Listening to everyone's needs. So we can deliver what we said we would. And we aren't afraid to show people the devastation that stroke causes. And what people can do to help those affected live their best life after stroke.



We give it our all.

Our resolve to make a difference motivates everyone we work with. With one eye on the bigger picture, we harness our passion and expertise to get them as fired up as we are. So we can continue to empower people affected by stroke to retake control of their lives and speak up for themselves. And champion their needs when they can't.



Find out more about who we are and what we do on **stroke.org.uk**.



Our support services

Our services support people to rebuild their lives after stroke. The impact of stroke often lasts a lifetime and we know that people's needs change over time. We believe everyone deserves to live the best life they can after stroke.

Stroke can impact work, relationships, confidence, self-esteem, independence, financial position, decision-making abilities, housing needs, ability to drive and social life to name but a few. It is critical that people affected by stroke receive the support they need in the long-term to rebuild their lives and lead the best life possible.



Across the UK we deliver **163** local support services.



In England we are funded to deliver **70** community-based services by the NHS. Depending on the level of funding and local identified needs, we provide a range of support offers.

Stroke recovery service

The overall aim of Stroke Association Stroke Recovery Service is to provide and coordinate the longer-term personalised support that people affected by stroke need to rebuild their lives after stroke, live full lives in their communities and prevent further stroke.

We work alongside people affected by stroke to develop and deliver a personalised stroke support plan, based on what's important to them and their personal goals. As part of this service we provide emotional support, a listening ear, giving people time to regularly review where they are at with their recovery.

We also provide high quality personalised information and tools for individuals to self-manage and to support recovery and life after stroke.

Supporting people affected by stroke to navigate the stroke pathway and the wider care system, understanding the support available to them and how it can be accessed, empowering people to self-manage their care and the impacts of their stroke, and maximise the potential of community-based support.







Post Stroke Reviews

Stroke survivors' experiences and needs change over time. We provide reviews at 6 and 12 months post stroke. Reviews help to identify any unmet needs at these points. Support in the form of a review ensures appropriate, person centred, tailored support is provided to assist re-integration into the community and maximise the quality of life experienced by stroke survivors, their carer/s and families.

This formal check-in point can be a reminder of what the stroke survivor has achieved, a valuable opportunity to reflect back the journey the person affected by stroke has had, and encourage them to be fully invested in rebuilding their life after stroke.

Communication Support

Our Communication Support service helps stroke survivors who have communication difficulties following a stroke. The service is designed to enable stroke survivors to achieve the best possible level of communication, whilst improving confidence and independence. Our service offers personalised support driven by the identified needs and desired outcomes of both the stroke survivor and carer. We offer a range of support options including: one to one support, signposting and referrals, individual carer support and education, and regular reviews. Our service also offers opportunities for community-based support, including access to focused workshop sessions, local peer support networks, and community education.

Emotional Support Service

Our Emotional Support Service helps those affected by stroke come to terms with what has happened to them. The service is for stroke survivors and carers who require specialist emotional support interventions at level 2 of the Stepped Care Model for psychological interventions after stroke.

The service is provided by qualified counsellors. The service encourages stroke survivors to explore issues such as; loss and adjustment, relationships, understanding guilt and anger and building confidence and self-esteem.

Priorities for Improvements 2022/2023

Safety

The safety and wellbeing of the people that we support as well as that of our staff and volunteers is crucial.

It is essential that our staff and volunteers are provided with high quality training to be able to carry out their roles safely and effectively when they are supporting stroke survivors and their families. To improve this we have invested in a new learning management system called LEARN.

In 2022/2023 we will be continue to make improvements to LEARN and provide access for all of our volunteers.

What did we have in place before?

We used a platform called STAR. This was only available to staff and a very limited number of volunteers. This system was functional and allowed staff to access and complete mandatory training.

Why do we want to improve this?

Based on staff feedback and our experiences, we recognised that STAR was not working as well as we needed it to. It was hard for staff to search what courses were available, which ones were essential to complete and managers were not able to easily confirm that staff had completed all relevant training. Managers relied on an extra monthly report, produced by the People Development Team to cross reference training for teams.

STAR was not accessible to all of our volunteers who provide a vital role in supporting the services that we provide.

Who was involved in this work?

Our People Development team set up staff and volunteer workshops to gather in-depth feedback about what we needed from a new learning system. A smaller user group was then established with staff from across directorates. This group used the feedback from the workshops to develop the requirements for the new system. This criteria was used to appoint a supplier to provide our new learning system.

What are we aiming to achieve?

To have a learning management system that;

- Is more efficient and provides real time accurate data
- Better supports remote working
- Is easily and securely accessible for all of our people, including volunteers
- Increases content for volunteers
- Improves training compliance rates
- Better enables us to support our cultural ambitions. Supporting better access to learning, development, wellbeing resources, coaching tools and performance management
- Has enriching sources of information and support that inform our teams and volunteers about the health and care system that Stroke Association operate within.





How will we measure improvements?

- Access to LEARN for all of our volunteers
- Improved engagement with the system and content - increased number of course views
- Improved training compliance rates (above 95%)
- Engagement and development of teams and volunteers – increased knowledge and understanding of health & care system

What are the plans during 2022/2023?

During 2022/2023 we will be focusing on ensuring that all of our volunteers have access to LEARN.

We will review the training needs of the volunteers that support our services. We will develop improved content to ensure that our volunteers can carry out their role safely and effectively when supporting people affected by stroke.

Encourage our volunteers to access training, support and enriching materials that go 'beyond the volunteer role' to encourage our volunteers to be up to date with stroke and related impacts.

Engage our staff teams with development of easily accessible information, resources, training in a range of formats (videos, recorded webinars, documents etc).

We will explore the potential for integrating LEARN with other new systems, such as Performance Management and HR systems.

Effectiveness

Quality Framework

Over the next twelve months we will be putting in place a new Quality Framework for all of our support services. The Quality Framework will outline our approach to managing and assuring the quality of the support we provide to stroke survivors and their families.

The Framework will be based on our three dimensions of quality – effectiveness, experience and safety.

Why is it important?

We want to provide confidence to ourselves and others that we are delivering high quality support and ensure that we take opportunities to do even better. Having clear and consistent expectations, and providing clarity on roles, responsibilities and accountabilities related to quality, will enable us to drive our approach to quality management and assurance.

What will the quality framework include?

The framework will cover both the 'what' of quality as well as the 'how' (how we implement our quality management and assurance system). It will:

- Define quality and its dimensions
- Outline a set of quality statements, which describe the features that need to be in place to drive and ensure high quality support provision. These will cover topics from accessibility, data protection and health inequalities through to user reported outcomes and staff wellbeing
- Define how we monitor, assess and improve the quality of our support and performance against those statements
- Describe how we report on quality

Effectiveness

Our support delivers outcomes that are of value to the person, and makes best use of resources

Experience

Our support puts the person at the centre, and provides an accessible and timely experience

Safety

Our support is provided in a way that promotes the safety of the person we're supporting and that of our people

What will our focus be during 2022/2023?

This year we will be developing and finalising a set of Quality Statements. We will involve people affected by stroke, so that they reflect their expectations in relation to quality. We will make our Quality Framework publically available, including an accessible version for people affected by stroke.

We will put the Quality Framework in place across our support services. We will work with frontline staff to jointly develop guidance and tools to enable this.

We will put in place a mechanism for quality oversight and support, and agree our reporting requirements in relation to quality.

How will we measure this?

We will see the quality framework being employed into practice, and examples of it driving quality improvement, as well as helping identify our quality improvement priorities going forward.

Accessibility

The impacts of stroke can be complex and vary from person to person. Many of these impacts bring with them accessibility needs at a scale beyond that seen in the general population. There is growing awareness that many barriers that affect accessibility could be reduced or removed, with the right considerations and appropriate support.

We know that health inequalities exist across the whole stroke pathway – from stroke prevention, through to the treatment and support people receive to rebuild their lives after stroke. We also know that stroke disproportionately affects some groups more than others, but this isn't reflected in those affected by stroke we currently support.

We want to do more to address accessibility within the Stroke Association. Accessibility for our charity means "making information, activities, and the environment sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible".

Why are we doing this?

Accessibility at the Stroke Association has been reactive. Many of our health publications are available in large print or audio versions and there are some specific aphasia-friendly resources. We know that we can and want to do more.

Where are we now?

We have developed an Accessibility Maturity Model to help us to underpin our work to improve the accessibility of our charity. The Model is a helpful way of describing the type of experiences stroke survivors, staff and volunteers would be having as we increase our maturity in relation to accessibility, and the core capabilities that we would need to have in place to deliver those experiences. Capabilities include things such as knowledge, skills, policies, tools and budgets. A maturity model enables us to assess where we are now, define where we want to be and, most importantly, the steps we need to take to get there.

Our Accessibility Plan for 22/23 outlines the practical steps we need to take over the next 12 months to start to increase our accessibility maturity. This work is led by our dedicated Accessibility Lead and Accessibility Assistant, working with colleagues across the charity and people affected by stroke.

Who is involved in this piece of work?

Our Accessibility Maturity Model has been created and shaped through insight conversations with a range of people across our charity, as well as with external accessibility experts. In total, sixty two members of staff and volunteers and fifteen people affected by stroke were involved in these conversations.

Why are we focussing on accessibility?

Making our charity accessible helps to ensure that we're able to add value to the lives of as many people affected by stroke as possible. It also helps us to provide a great experience of our charity for stroke survivors, family members, supporters, staff and volunteers.

We are committed to delivering the best possible value and experience to people affected by stroke, as well as our staff and volunteers. It is important that we recognise how best to support accessibility needs so we can remove barriers to our support and help people to achieve their best outcomes. Everyone deserves the opportunity to access information and support they need, when they need it. By increasing our people's capabilities to support individuals with accessibility needs we aim to provide better services that are more inclusive.



What is our plan for 2022/2023?

We want to embed accessibility into our organisational culture, making this part of everything that we do. We recognise that everyone has a role to play in supporting accessibility and our ways of working need to be inclusive.

During 2022/2023 we will implement our accessibility plan by:

- Holding weekly accessibility surgeries available to all staff
- Updating tools and forms to support communication with stroke survivors with aphasia
- Developing a 'how to' accessible series to provide guidance on how to make documents, presentations and meetings accessible
- Developing 'when to' guidance to identify when different accessible versions are needed
- Expanding the use of interpretation services by developing a clear interpretation policy and creating greater awareness of the interpreting service
- Building on our understanding of translation work and establish best practice by developing a clear translation policy and identifying trusted suppliers
- Expanding training opportunities, including the launch the Communication Access Symbol Training and broader accessibility training for staff and volunteers who work with stroke survivors
- Re-establishing Aphasia and Accessible Voices Network with people affected by stroke to support development of Stroke Association services and resources
- Working with external accessibility experts and partners to share learnings, best practice and developments in the field of accessibility



How will this be measured?

We need to know whether our activities are making the intended difference and improving the accessibility and experience of our charity for our staff, volunteers and stroke survivors.

We will collect learnings and feedback routinely in our day-to-day activities. Annually we will carry out an Accessibility Maturity Assessment to understand 'where we are now' and assess our progress. This will inform our subsequent year's plans.

Experience

During the coming year we are focussed on improving how we capture, record and demonstrate the difference that our support services make. We know that we make an impact, but we also know that we can improve our understanding of how people affected by stroke experience our support to enhance the quality of our services.

We will be inviting people who receive our services to give us feedback through a series of questions, designed by people with lived experience of stroke, to self-report the difference it has made in their lives, and their experiences of our services.

We will use methods to allow stroke survivors and carers to be able to express themselves freely, and will have strategies for including the perspectives of stroke survivors with communication difficulties.



What's happening now?

Currently at the end of our commissioned service support our staff capture the outcomes that they consider have been achieved by the person affected by stroke on our CRM Database from a predefined list. This is focussed on what actions have been taken, rather than the difference that the service has made from the stroke survivors perspective.

Stroke survivors are also sent a questionnaire, by email, inviting them to tell us about their experiences of our services. Completed questionnaires are collated and returned to each local service to learn from and put in place action plans if needed.

We recognise that the format and method of this survey isn't accessible for everyone and that the questions we ask don't allow us to gather the type of insight to enable us to make further service improvements.

What are we aiming to achieve?

- To measure ourselves by the difference we make to people affected by stroke, rather than the work that we do
- To use evidence to inform decisions and actions, working together towards a shared set of outcomes
- Hold ourselves to account by being transparent about what we do
- Develop our capabilities to use data and evidence to inform our decision-making, service design and delivery
- Harnessing the value and diversity that everyone brings to help deliver our goals

Who is involved in this?

The perspectives of stroke survivors and carers who have received our services are at the centre of this work. We have actively engaged people affected by stroke from across the UK, ensuring that we had representation, including those that could be considered to be affected by health inequalities.

Frontline staff and volunteers are instrumental in designing methods for gaining the feedback, ensuring that we

- Take learnings from previous methods
- Harness understanding of the people our teams work with
- Design questions in a way that will be useful for learning at a local level, as well as across the organisation.

Our 'Aphasia and Accessible Voices' network who have lived experience of stroke have advised on suggested methods of capturing this feedback. Our Accessibility team and Health Inequalities Lead have also had input into this work.

What are the benefits of improving our experience and outcome measures?

- More systematic and accessible evaluation
- Improved learning and reporting
- More meaningful data, with a focus on outcomes and experiences from the perspective of people affected by stroke
- Enabling us to continually improve on the value our services provide to stroke survivors and carers across the UK.

How will we measure this improvement?

We will pilot our new approaches to capturing self-reported outcomes and experiences in a sample of our services between July and September 2022. We will evaluate what we find from both internal and external perspectives and use the learnings from the pilots to make further improvements to our approaches. We plan to roll out our new approach across all of our services from April 2023 onwards.

The broader impact of this approach to evaluation will be demonstrated in the way it is used to continuously learn about and improve quality of our services.

Review of Quality Improvements 2021/2022

This is the Stroke Association's first Quality Account. This does not mean that we have been standing still when it comes to quality. During 2021/2022 we have made significant improvements to the quality of the services that we provide. Two big areas of achievement were the changes that we made are our service delivery model and how we adapted in response to the pandemic.

Service delivery model

We've reviewed our service delivery model. This is to enable us to reach more people affected by stroke across the UK and make an even bigger difference for them, in a way that's sustainable and makes best use of our expertise. We transformed our service delivery model for a number of reasons. Firstly, to reach more people affected by stroke. We currently only reach about 30% of new stroke survivors each year. We want to be there to support all people affected by stroke to rebuild their lives.



Secondly, to make a bigger difference using our resources. We spent a lot of time managing and delivering a large portfolio of different support services. To make the most difference and be most efficient we want to focus on managing and delivering those services which we know make the biggest difference, which can support many people, which we are experts in delivering and which are likely to be sustainable longer-term.

Finally, to provide a more coherent, joined up and personalised experience of our support and of our charity. We have lots of fantastic support to offer. We want people to be clear on how we can support them, and have a seamless, personalised and ongoing journey with our charity.

During 2020/21 we have retired some of our support products and started to design our desired service model in detail. This includes specifying how each service in the model works, how they relate and connect to one another, and the processes, people, technology and information required to make the model work effectively and deliver a great experience.

Our strategic corporate goals remain unchanged and we're fully committed to doing everything we can for stroke survivors and their families to rebuild their lives after stroke.

Culture and coaching

We have focused on and encouraged a positive shifts in our culture. For six important aspects of culture we have developed a three-year vision for what we'd like to see and an 18 month plan of interventions. These areas are:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- User involvement
- Knowledge
- Management and performance
- Remote working
- System leadership

We are measuring and celebrating positive cultural change through perception surveys and by collecting evidence of changes in attitudes and behaviours.

Service Delivery Coaches are now supporting and empowering our local staff to deliver high quality stroke support services, ensuring stroke survivors and their carers receive the best possible support to rebuild their lives after stroke.

The Service Delivery Coaches role is led by a coaching ethos, acting as a coach and supporting coordinators to be their best whilst providing support for stroke survivors and their carers, and nurturing their wellbeing "We care for ourselves as we care for others". Service Delivery Coaches help to empower coordinators to take ownership for the continuous improvement of quality and consistency of the services we provide.





The impact of the pandemic

Since the start of the pandemic we've worked hard to provide support to thousands of people affected by stroke. We've been both resilient and innovative in adapting our services and finding new ways to connect, providing meaningful support through Zoom, Teams and over the phone.

We've learnt a lot from the pandemic and have used this insight to allow us to take informed decisions about the best ways to support people affected by stroke in a much more agile way.

We know that we can provide a high level of support remotely and this insight has allowed us to adapt our approach to the support we provide, enabling us to support more people to rebuild their lives after stroke.

Our services

- Continue to offer a range of options in the way that we provide our support including telephone, video call and home visits.
- Agree with each individual the best method of support for them to ensure their preferences and needs are met. Bearing in mind what we know about the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches.
- Acknowledge that someone's preference may change throughout their journey with us. We'll check in with them regularly and adjust support as required.





Feedback from Stroke Survivors



Throughout the year we receive feedback from stroke survivors and carers about the service that we have provided. We have captured some of these comments below.

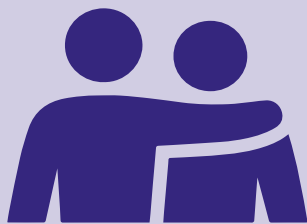
"The Stroke Association helped me a lot and supported me a lot and is still supporting me, without her help I would be lost."

"She really understood and she made you feel you could say whatever you wanted. She listened really well and she made a point of talking to both the stroke survivor and me."



"I had some help on the phone from the Stroke Association, she made me feel human again."

"She treated me with respect. She didn't talk down to me, she listened. She just gave you the positives instead of the negatives."



"She personalised it for me. She was always supportive and she tailored her advice to my needs."

She picked up on things I'd never said. She told me it's normal to feel like this, to think the things I was thinking. She talked me through it. She didn't talk to me with big words, she talked on my level. She explained everything. I never had to ask her to explain anything again. She'd never say she was too busy to talk, she listened to me for as long as needed.

Statement from Oldham CCG

Oldham Clinical Commissioning Groups welcome the Quality Account from the Stroke Association for 2021/22. Commissioners are pleased to have the opportunity to review this year's submission as the quality of the services being delivered locally continues to be at the heart of commissioning processes. The report tells the story of the many achievements made by the Stroke Association and highlights the hard work to place those who have been directly affected by a stroke at the very heart of their efforts.

We are delighted to read about the Stroke Associations 2022/2023 priorities for improvement into: Safety, Effectiveness, Accessibility and Experience. We agree with the priorities clearly set out in the report and support the approaches used for improving clinical effectiveness, improving outcomes, embedding, and measuring quality.

The report details the Stroke Associations commitment to investing in and improving the support and training offer for staff and continues to look for solutions to support the delivery of care. The report recognises the huge contribution found in obtaining feedback from service users to help shape and develop the service.

Partnership working was another key feature within the report and showed expansion of the service to meet the needs of their clients. Future assurance foundations were laid following the detailed information given around the Stroke Associations plans to introduce over the next 12 months a New Quality Framework. The new quality framework aims to clearly outline the services approach to managing and assuring the quality of the support provided to stroke survivors and their families.

The Stroke Associations 3-year vision for the future offered a positive and insightful overview into the future aspirations for the organisation, the promotion of inclusion, equality and diversity, knowledge, management and performance, quality, positive leadership and the importance of their service users involvement certainly demonstrated a degree of diligence from the Stroke Association to fostering an organisational culture which values their clients, the families and of the staff working within their service.

Furthermore, as commissioning arrangements change during 2022/23 to become placed based integrated systems under NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care, we will continue to support and work closely with the Stroke Association to review quality from a whole system perspective.

Claire Smith
Director of Nursing and Quality

Care Quality Commission

The Stroke Association is not required to be registered with the Care Quality Commission

When stroke strikes, part of your brain shuts down. And so does a part of you. Life changes instantly and recovery is tough. But 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**.

We're here for you.

Stroke Helpline: **0303 3033 100**

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

Email: **helpline@stroke.org.uk**

If you would like to talk to us about this report or be provided with a printed version please get in touch:

Email: **productmanagement@stroke.org.uk**

Address:

**Stroke Association
Northampton Resource Centre
1 Sterling Business Park
Salthouse Road
Northampton
NN4 7EX**

Rebuilding lives after stroke

