

Summer 2019

Stroke News

For everyone affected by stroke

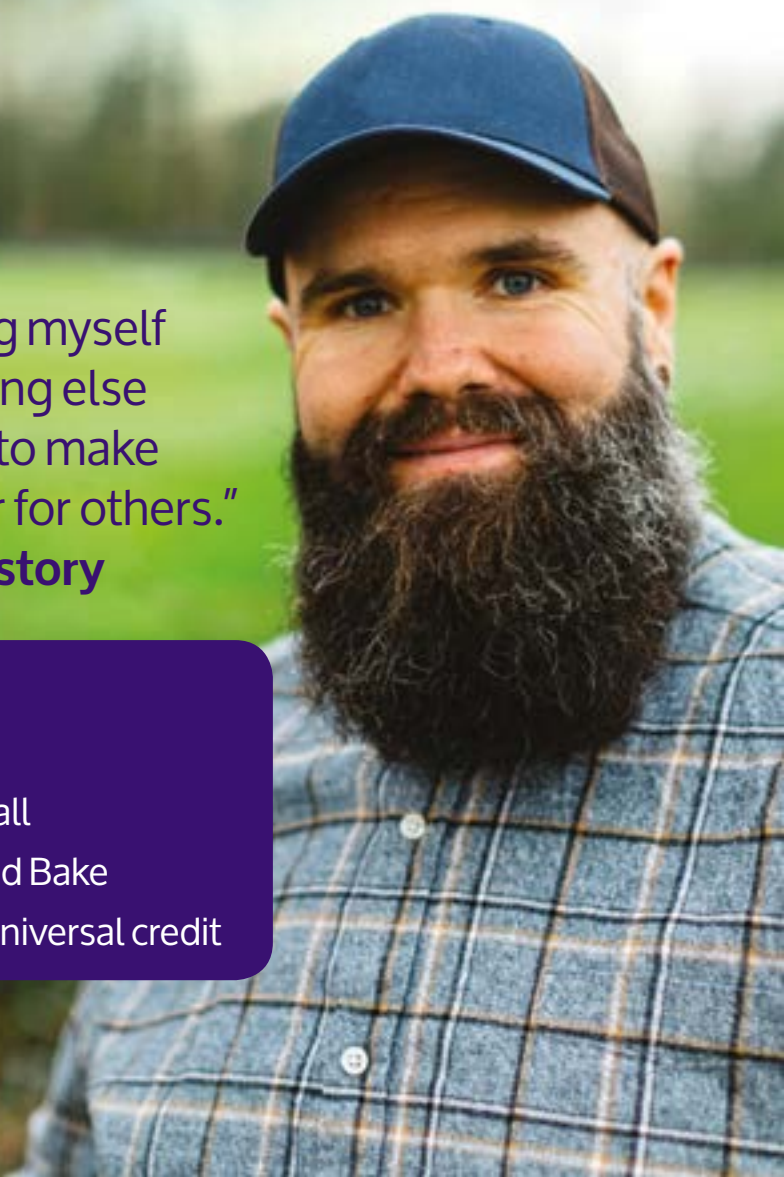
Stroke
Association

"I'm recycling myself
into something else
and helping to make
things better for others."

Read Paul's story

This issue:

- Art therapy
- Walking football
- Give a Hand and Bake
- Your guide to universal credit



My Stroke Guide

Online stroke support

Stroke can change your life in an instant, but recovery is possible. As well as free access to trusted advice, information and support 24/7, My Stroke Guide connects you to our online community, to find out how others manage their recovery.

Stroke
Association



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Editor's letter

"If you don't have a disability that people can see, they think you're fine. They have no idea about the disabilities that exist in your brain – the invisible wounds," says Paul, our cover star.

This issue, we speak to survivors about the hidden emotional and cognitive effects of stroke and the impact they've had on their lives. Each of them has discovered a creative way to express how they feel and find a new way forward.

As a former English teacher, it's Paul's passion for story telling that's inspired him to get involved in our Rebuilding Lives campaign (page 8).

11-year-old Joe uses his YouTube channel to help with his mental health and inspire others (page 20). While our Christmas card competition winner, Jacky, finds painting helps her to manage her anxiety. Hear her story and find out how you can enter this year's competition on page 38.



I hope you
enjoy this issue.

Christine Webster, Editor

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Over to you

I have just been reading the spring issue of Stroke News. I found the article about getting into golf interesting and felt I should tell you about our Blackpool stroke guys and girls!

My husband had a stroke three years ago and he has had lots of help from our Fylde and Wyre Stroke Support Group. At the moment we're going to Fleetwood each week to play golf. Our golf pro, Dan Skelder, is the most patient and helpful man you could wish to meet. He helps the group with some very difficult problems and nothing is too much trouble.

Our group's organiser, John Lanes, does a great job arranging activities for stroke survivors and I just felt I had to tell you how dedicated these volunteers are. It's a pleasure to know them! People like them should be afforded as much help as possible to continue the very valuable work they do.

I can't speak highly enough about how their help has improved the progress of my husband's recovery. Volunteers and organisers of groups like this deserve genuine recognition for their patience and dedication.

Shirley New

Stroke Helpline: **0303 3033 100**

Find your local services, clubs and groups: **stroke.org.uk/support**

Join our online community: **mystrokeguide.com**

Find information about stroke: **stroke.org.uk/publications**



Do you have something to share? Write to us:

Stroke News, 240 City Road, London, EC1V 2PR
or email **strokenews@stroke.org.uk**

Finding help after a stroke

If you or someone close to you has had a stroke, we're here to help.

Contact our helpline:
0303 3033 100
stroke.org.uk/gethelp



From our Chief Executive

Thank you for supporting our Rebuilding Lives campaign. We've been overwhelmed by the response from the stroke community and the general public.

It's brilliant to see stroke starting to become part of the national conversation – especially as our research shows that over a quarter of UK adults don't know that stroke happens in the brain. And that this knowledge gap is impacting upon stroke survivors' recoveries. We want to enable more people to learn about stroke and to take action to support those affected, so please help us to spread the word (see page 11).

As a charity, we want to listen to and amplify the voices of people affected by stroke at every opportunity. Last summer, we held the largest ever survey of stroke survivors and carers – with over 10,000 respondents – to learn more about their experiences.

We're publishing the findings in our 'Lived experience of stroke' report, which focuses on the



hidden effects of stroke (page 16), practical impacts of stroke, caring for a stroke survivor and support available after stroke. We'll be using these results to strengthen our UK campaigning efforts to improve stroke care, and to help us develop the support we offer. Visit stroke.org.uk to find out more.

Juliet Bouverie

"Recycling myself"

Since his stroke in 2016, Paul McLean, from County Armagh, has committed himself to supporting other survivors through volunteering, fundraising and, most recently, by becoming one of the stars of our Rebuilding Lives campaign. Here he shares his experiences.

"I'm a story person. I was an English and drama teacher, and before that, an actor –everything I did was about stories and how important they are. The only thing you truly own is your story. So as soon as I got my brain to a place where I could start asking questions again, I wanted to be able to understand and tell mine.

I was in the living room on a Saturday morning. I went to look at my phone and I couldn't lift my right hand. I tried to tell my wife, Suzi, but I couldn't speak. She looked at me and said, 'What's wrong with your face?' She thought I was joking around, but soon realised something was seriously wrong.



"As soon as I got my brain to a place where I could start asking questions again, I wanted to be able to understand and tell my story."



We're here to support you to rebuild your life after stroke. You can find out more, and help spread the word by visiting and sharing stroke.org.uk/RebuildingLives.

I don't remember travelling to the hospital. I just remember the consultant who was doing my mechanical thrombectomy telling me to stop moving my head because I kept turning it to the side while he was in my brain! I had a 10% chance of surviving the operation. But I'm stubborn and decided I'd push my way through.

I found out later that I'd been taken to the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, rather than my local hospital in Craigavon, because a paramedic thought that my best chance of survival was to go to straight to the only hospital in Northern Ireland that performs thrombectomies. He saved my life by taking me to the best hospital I could go to.

To begin with, I didn't really understand how much had changed in my body. But I was fortunate that my brain found everything funny. Funny that I couldn't stand up. Funny that if I needed to pee, I had to press a button. Everything seemed silly and strange. It all became part of this brand new story.

I still find some of the things I do because of my stroke funny. People find it strange that I can laugh about it and think it's a mechanism to make me feel better. Maybe it is, but to me it's the only way. This stroke could destroy my life - or it could be a funny part of my life. It changes things every single day. But instead of being sad, I have to find a way forward.

Thanks to the thrombectomy, my physical disability is limited. I can walk quite well, and completed the Camino de Santiago to raise money for the Stroke Association. But I have a lot of disabilities that still exist in my brain – invisible wounds. I forget things really quickly. After my stroke, I lost a lot of information - old memories come back as if they're brand new. I also lose balance and fall over, especially when I'm tired or having a bad day. But I'm ok with that. I know how to prepare myself for a bad day and get myself ready for the good days that will come after it.

I have aphasia too. At first I couldn't really speak, then with the help of the Stroke Association's

Communication Plus Group, more words came back. It was fantastic – it's the reason I'm able to talk to you now. But I can't read or write, which means I can't go back to being a teacher. So now my job is to help other stroke survivors. Volunteering has opened up a massive opportunity for me. I'm recycling myself into something else and helping to make things better for other people.

Stroke for me was a pause, not the end of the story. It was a chapter in the middle. The semi-colon in the middle of a sentence that means there's more to come. With the Rebuilding Lives campaign, I want to change other people's stories and help them to see there's happiness and hope on really bad days."

Support for vascular dementia

Learning that you or a loved one has vascular dementia can be frightening and overwhelming. But there's lots you can do to make sure you get the right support and can continue living well now and in the future.

Simon Stead from our Stroke Helpline shares some advice.

Q What is vascular dementia?

Dementia is a condition that can affect your memory and cause difficulties with problem solving, thinking, mood and behaviour. Vascular dementia is a common form of dementia. It happens if you have reduced blood supply to parts of your brain, causing cell damage.

Q I've been diagnosed with vascular dementia.

What do I do now?

- Talking about how you feel can help you to process your emotions and come to terms with your diagnosis. Many people find support groups helpful. Or you might prefer to confide in family and friends.
- Be open with loved ones. Encourage them to ask questions. Discuss the challenges you might face so you can look for solutions together. For example, who will manage your finances when you need additional support.
- Write a list of all the questions you have and take it to your next doctor's appointment. Finding out as much as you can will help to ease your worries.
- Keep physically and mentally active by doing the things you love, even if you need to change how you do it or use adaptations. For example, listening to audio tapes if your reading ability declines.



Q My loved one has dementia. How can I help them?

- Talk to them and plan for the future together so you can be confident you're following their wishes as far as possible.
- Support them to remain independent. Try to do things with, rather than for, them. Look into aids and improvements to help them with daily tasks. For example, signs around the home or automated reminders.
- Ask your council for a carer's assessment to see what support they can provide at home.
- Look after yourself. Make sure you have someone to talk to. Involve family and friends and ask for help when you need it.



Call our Stroke Helpline on **0303 3033 100**.

Download or listen to our guide from stroke.org.uk/vascular_dementia.

Recovery through art and volunteering

Tom was cooking in the pub kitchen where he worked as a breakfast chef, when he collapsed, unable to speak.

"I thought I'd just fainted," Tom recalls. "I didn't know what was going on – all I knew was that I was on the floor. In the ambulance they were asking me questions but they couldn't get a word out of me.

"I started talking a few days after, but the right words weren't coming out. I was thinking the right word but saying the wrong one. But even though you can't produce a word, you still worry. Everything was going through my mind. If I'm not working, how's the mortgage going to get paid? How's my family going to cope?"

The impact of the stroke on his family life took its toll of Tom's mental health. After a second stroke a year later, he sank deeper

into depression. "On that day, the lights went out of me. I didn't want to see anybody. I wanted to be in total darkness.

"The fatigue was huge. I could sleep 22, 23 hours a day. It was summer – my family had days out planned, and I couldn't go because I was too tired. I'd sit and feel guilty that I wasn't there. It adds to your depression, and ferments away at you."

Recognising he needed support, Tom began attending local art therapy classes at the Longstone Stroke Centre, Edinburgh.

"We were told to draw what we wanted! So I would draw something that was in my head. We started chatting about how we felt and everything got put into the picture. In the beginning, mine were all dark and gloomy – deep wells or tunnels I couldn't see the end of. Then over the weeks it lightened up and changed. It helped me immensely."

"On that day, the lights went out of me. I didn't want to see anybody. I wanted to be in total darkness."





A few hours a month can make a world of difference...

Work with us to rebuild lives after stroke. By supporting our stroke groups, you can share and learn new skills and get hands on experience of supporting people on their road to recovery.

Volunteer with your local stroke group.

Find out more at stroke.org.uk/volunteer

Rebuilding lives after stroke

Stroke
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"One day, someone came into our group and asked for volunteers. I thought that if I could help somebody else with this situation that would be great." Tom trained to be a Stroke Ambassador and recently spoke at the UK Stroke Assembly in Glasgow. "Before my stroke, I wouldn't talk to a stranger. But that's completely changed – I love telling my story. People were coming up to me and telling me about their stories too."

"Volunteering has really helped my recovery. The biggest thing I try to tell people is that you have to say how you feel. If you say you're fine every single day, you're lying to yourself. But you can also laugh at your stroke, because this is the new you. We celebrate my stroke day, because it's a start to a new life."



Our 'Hidden effects of stroke' report shines a light on the effects of stroke that are harder to see, such as depression and fatigue. Visit stroke.org.uk/experience to read the full report.



Planning for the future

Last issue, we shared the exciting news that stroke is now a priority in NHS England's Long Term Plan, and that we're working with health leaders to make sure it's implemented locally. Alongside this, we've also been working closely with NHS England, clinical experts and people affected by stroke to shape the National Stroke Programme.

What is the National Stroke Programme?

Together with our partners, we've developed a plan of work to support changes in the health and care system. This focuses on improving emergency stroke care, rehabilitation, stroke prevention and the data available to help shape services, and develop the stroke workforce.

How does this differ from the Long Term Plan?

The Long Term Plan, launched in January 2019, sets out NHS England's overall direction for the next 10 years. It sets ambitious targets for a range of conditions, including stroke and cardiovascular disease.

The National Stroke Programme is a plan for supporting improvements in stroke care over the next few years to meet the goals in the Long Term Plan. It will help to make world class stroke care available to more people, and in more places, across England.

"I know what a difference it makes to have access to great stroke aftercare," says stroke survivor and campaigner Karen Pritchard. "Rehabilitation and ongoing care should be accessible to all people, no matter where they live. It's wrong that the postcode lottery should leave some stroke survivors desperate and alone, without the proper care needed."

How are stroke survivors involved in the National Stroke Programme?

We're working with stroke survivors and carers to ensure their needs and experiences are reflected in the programme. Stroke survivors are helping to develop key projects. These include a stroke passport to give stroke survivors and carers clear information on what support is required to see ongoing progress, and who will provide that support.

"It's vital that the changes we're working towards are influenced by stroke survivors," says Karen. "I feel that, by working with the Stroke Association, the changes we want and that are so desperately needed, will happen."



Visit stroke.org.uk/campaigns to get our latest campaign updates. To find out how you can get involved in campaigning, contact campaigns@stroke.org.uk.



Inspiring others online

Eleven-year-old Joe Hannon survived a stroke after heart surgery in 2013. Now he's aspiring to help other child stroke survivors and their families and become a YouTube star, with his new YouTube channel 'ABLE'.

"Joe had a serious heart problem and needed a transplant," said Joe's dad, Ed. "While waiting for a donor, he had to be fitted with a pump which could take the work of his heart, but there was a risk of both blood clots and bleeds. And on Boxing Day 2013, he had a big stroke."

"It wasn't until he started rehab after his heart transplant in January 2014 that he saw the long-term effects," continued Ed. "We found that awareness of childhood stroke was limited. When we went home, we spoke to the Stroke Association, in particular Anna from the Childhood Stroke Project. She gave us advice, emotional support and the information we needed."

After lots of rehabilitation, Joe slowly improved. He has a left-sided weakness and battles fatigue and mental health issues, but tries not to let his disability affect him. He went back to school, started playing football again and joined a mixed martial arts (MMA) club to help with his strength and conditioning.

Pursuing these hobbies online encouraged Joe to set up his own YouTube channel. "He wanted to talk about things he really enjoys, but with this twist of talking about his disability as well," said Ed. "We shoot it on his mobile phone. He'll have ideas beforehand and there's usually a few takes involved, but we don't script it. It's given him confidence and improved his mental health – he's happier at the moment, and YouTube has helped with that."

Joe said: "When you get a video done that feels quite satisfying. It's nice that you get instant responses. My first video has 2.3k views which I'm really proud of. That's the one about my story and recovery from stroke."

"When I was dealing with tough times, I wanted to see something inspiring. If I do the things I love and fill my channel with videos, there'll be other kids in my situation who can come to me and find inspiration."

To watch Joe's channel, go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search 'ABLE'. Look out for his merchandise too, which he's selling to raise money for the Stroke Association.





Strength in co-creating

The UK Stroke Club Conference – known as UKSCC – is an annual two-day event that brings together the wonderful people who organise and volunteer at stroke clubs and groups around the UK. It's a great opportunity to share ideas and best practice, and learn more about running a group and supporting members.

Since it was established in 2005, UKSCC has grown in numbers and success, becoming the highlight of the year for many club and group representatives. We want to carry on developing the conference to ensure it continues to be a valuable and positive experience. So, this year,

we set up the UKSCC planning group - a team of volunteers and people affected by stroke from clubs and groups - to help us to generate ideas for the future.

"I've attended the Club Conference twice before," said Bryan Hilton, volunteer and member of the UKSCC planning group. "You can meet and learn from other volunteers and stroke survivors, and get the latest news on stroke and the Stroke Association.

"I wanted to be involved in the planning group for the event as it's so important to keep the focus of the programme on the needs of the target audience.



James Green (facing camera) shares ideas with other stroke survivors and volunteers

I can use my experiences at past conferences and as Chair of the Stowmarket Support Group to help sharpen ideas for the future."

Our Volunteer Support Officer, James Green, is also involved in developing the UKSCC. "Part of my role is to give support to our clubs and groups," he said. "I'm a direct link between them and our charity, so I've been asking stroke survivors what they'd like to see included in this year's event. It's really important that the people we support are able to shape the event, so they know that they'll get a tailored and useful experience."



Thanks to everyone involved in the planning sessions. If you want to help shape our work and give your insights, we'd love to hear from you. Visit stroke.org.uk/partnerships to find out more about our Voices in Partnership and research groups.

Join us at the UK Stroke Club Conference 2019 on Friday 4 - Saturday 5 October at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham. For further details, go to stroke.org.uk/uksc.

Artistic expression

If you were to draw or paint your stroke, what would it look like? For Mark James, 58, it was the head of a dragon – jaws open, eyes menacing.

Mark and his wife were driving home from an auction when he collapsed. "I just fell on my wife while she was driving," he said. "We could've both died. I woke up in hospital. I couldn't move my arm, hand or leg. I couldn't speak.

Before his stroke, Mark used to paint and sell his pieces at art fairs. "I wanted to get back into it, but the easels I had were on three legs and moved easily. I wanted something sturdy and solid, so I applied for a Life After Stroke Grant for adapted art equipment. I also got a stool that I could adjust to the right height. They were fantastic."

Painting has helped Mark to process the impact of his stroke, inspiring works like the dragon

(pictured right). He recently shared this picture with fellow members of the South Tees Communication Support Service, prompting much discussion and inspiring the group to explore their own creative means of describing their stroke.

"Mark explained that he'd wanted to draw what his stroke felt like," said Stroke Association Support Coordinator, Karen Jones, who runs the group. "Sometimes you can express things that you can't put into words through poetry, or write a letter to help you get across what you want to say. Mark was able to express his experiences and emotions through a picture.

"The painting touched everyone because of what it represented," she continued. "For me, it was significant that we could only see the dragon's head and not the rest of the body. The colours were dark and frightening too. It really showed how he felt about his stroke and how he saw it."





Mark's painting resonated with many members of his group. "I felt the things he drew - the anger, the frustration - I've experienced them too," said Debbie Shaw. "Mark's art helped me to connect to my own feelings." Group member David Heath added: "Stroke is scary. I was frightened and frustrated. To see that expressed in a picture was fantastic."

Sharing his art is also helping Mark with his speech. "To begin with, I was only speaking to my family. It's hard to speak to

other people - you feel judged. When I started taking my art to fairs again, I put a sign by my stall to say that I'd had a stroke, so everyone understood. It was really good as it got me talking to other people. It doesn't matter if you say something wrong or you can't say what you mean because they'll help you. People are like that if they know.

"I've done another picture about my stroke since. This one's a heart. I wanted to paint something nice, just to say that I'm alive."



Visit **stroke.org.uk/support** to find services, clubs and groups in your area. And go to **stroke.org.uk/grants** to learn more about our Life After Stroke Grants.

Stroke can strike **anyone**

Over 400 children will have a stroke in the UK this year.

If your child is affected by stroke, we offer practical advice and emotional support.

Find out more at **stroke.org.uk/childhood** or call our Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100

Rebuilding lives after stroke

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World in (slower) motion



Walking football is among the fast-growing sports in the UK. This slower-paced, low-impact version soccer is opening up the game to all ages and abilities, and is ideal for stroke survivors looking to get more active and meet new people.



Cyril Loubon is a regular member of the Hillingdon Stroke Association Walking Football Group. "Since my stroke, I've had to cope with a lot of extra pain in my body and I'm not able to bend as much," he says. "Walking football has played an important part in my recovery. It's helped with my

physical symptoms, especially my balance. There's been improvement with my talking and it's helped my memory.

"Some people come to a game with their walking aids. We all have restrictions, but we play together, encourage one another, and learn from each other."

Nick Symmons, from local club Wealdstone FC, is one of the group's coaches. "The team plays at our local leisure centre. At the start of each session, we do some exercises to get them moving, thinking and trying new things,"

says Nick. "It's all about getting movement and coordination back at a pace they can manage. The level of support the players give one another is amazing. It's a very good all-round therapy."

Cyril agrees. "Football helps us to socialise and have fun together," he says. "We have the opportunity to communicate with other stroke survivors who perhaps have different experiences, which they're able to share. I've met new people who I would never have met otherwise and I enjoy the contact."

Visit stroke.org.uk/groups to find out more about your local clubs and groups and the activities they run. For more information about walking football, go to thewfa.co.uk or walkingfootball.com.



Coach Nick's top tips:

- The key to walking football is the walking – you're not allowed to run!
- It's a non-contact game so no tackling – it makes it much safer.
- Warm up with some gentle exercises such as dribbling or passing the ball. Slow continuous movement is best.
- Take it easy and don't overstretch. If the ball is out of your reach, just leave it.
- Take time to understand other players' capabilities. If you pass the ball to someone less mobile, leave them to control it and pass it back in their own time.
- Most importantly, let's make it an enjoyable experience – you're here to smile, so make it fun!

Baking a difference

Kate Aitken cared for her husband, Bob, for 11 years after a devastating stroke badly affected his mobility and speech. Then, in 2017, Kate herself had a life-changing stroke.

Sadly, while she was still recovering, Bob fell seriously ill and was brought into the same hospital. "After four days I could go home but I didn't want to leave him, so I slept by his bedside," Kate recalls. "I was very upset as my stroke had left me with aphasia, and some physical difficulties. I couldn't speak to him but I held his hand as he passed away."

Despite struggling with bereavement and the effects of her stroke, Kate was determined not to give in. She was referred to our Communication Support and Stroke Recovery services, and set herself goals to regain her independence. This included practising physical therapies to rebuild the strength in her hands, enabling her to get back to doing the thing she loves most: baking.

"Being the family cake-maker is a big part of who I am, so my family encouraged me to get baking again," says Kate. "It's a hobby I really enjoy. I like to bake for everyone - I bake a lot of treats for my friends at my Stroke Association communication and singing groups. I feel like I'm giving something back."

Kate's family are big fans of her cake creations. "She's a fabulous baker!" says her granddaughter Sarah. "From her Victoria sponge to her Bakewell tarts, it's impossible to choose a favourite because they are all delicious. Nana has always baked and I can't remember a time when she didn't have something ready to give the family when they visited. It was so important for her to be able to get back to baking after her stroke, it really helped her recovery."

From 28 October - 3 November, join Kate for Give a Hand and Bake. Don your aprons (or pop off to the shop - we won't tell...) and host a bake sale. Catch up with colleagues, friends and family over a slice of cake and a cuppa, while supporting stroke survivors to rebuild their lives.

For details and to sign up go to stroke.org.uk/bake.





Our future stroke research leaders

We want to establish and support the next generation of stroke research leaders to continue to improve stroke care and the lives of people affected by stroke in the years to come. We're proud to introduce you to four researchers at the start of their research careers who have recently been awarded Stroke Association Fellowships:

**Dr Lauren Hepworth,
University of Liverpool**

"I developed an interest in stroke care after I qualified as an orthoptist in 2007, and my research during my Masters degree and PhD focused on vision problems after stroke.

My research is testing a new questionnaire that measures the impact of stroke-related vision problems on stroke survivors' quality of life. In the future this questionnaire could be used in



clinical appointments to support conversations between healthcare professionals and stroke survivors about treatment options, the impact vision problems have on everyday life and adaptation."

**Dr Faye Wray,
University of Leeds**

"I'm working with stroke survivors with aphasia and their families to design and test a programme of support (a 'self-management' intervention) to help them to develop strategies to cope with aphasia in everyday situations.

Many stroke survivors with aphasia feel abandoned and lack confidence after they're discharged from hospital.



I hope that this programme will help them and their families to adjust to and manage their lives after stroke."

**Miriam Golding-Day,
University of Nottingham**

"My research explores how the availability and use of orthotics, like braces and splints, can affect stroke survivor's rehabilitation and whether changes to this could improve outcomes.

I'm an orthotist and have seen how a lack of access to orthotics can impact a stroke survivor's recovery. I want all stroke survivors



to receive the most effective care and support. I hope my work will highlight the benefits of seeing an orthotist earlier after stroke."

**Helen Morse,
University of East Anglia**

"Spatial neglect is a devastating condition where a person becomes unaware of objects or people on one side of their body. Critically, it affects around one-third of stroke survivors. My research will investigate whether a new computer-based assessment and treatment for spatial neglect can be used by stroke survivors in their homes.



I hope that this treatment will help future stroke survivors with spatial neglect make the best recovery they can, and increase their confidence and independence."



Find out more about these projects and other research we're funding: stroke.org.uk/research-projects.

Supercar Saturday

Saturday 26 October 2019

Castle Combe Circuit,
Chippenham, SN14 7EY

Gates open 9am. Admission £5,
concession £2.50, under 16s free
Experience supercar passenger rides
from £30

Rebuilding lives after stroke

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Rides
from
£30



Travelling abroad?

When you have a long-term condition like stroke, finding travel insurance can be daunting – how do you make sure you get the right cover for the right price? Our partners, AllClear Travel Insurance, share some tips:

Be honest about all pre-existing medical conditions – If you don't declare your conditions, you might not be fully covered if you need to claim.

Look at what's included in the cover – How much cancellation cover will you get and what is the excess? What activities are covered? Check these are right for you and you're not paying for things you don't need.

Check the details of bank account travel insurance packages – Some policies don't include pre-existing medical conditions, so make sure you're properly covered.

Cover your travelling companions – Ensure they can claim if the trip is cancelled because of your medical condition.



AllClear donate up to 20% of your premium to the Stroke Association when you purchase a policy. To find out more about AllClear, visit stroke.org.uk/allclear or call **0808 168 8733**.

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My winter scene

Congratulations to our 2019 Christmas card competition winner, Jacky Baldwin, for her wonderful 'A Winter Scene' design.

"I had two strokes in March 2016," says Jacky. "I have left-sided weakness, pain and balance problems. But I gradually learnt to walk with a stick and physically felt like I was recovering well. It was the debilitating anxiety I experienced that had the biggest impact on me."

For about a year after her strokes, Jacky's anxiety was so crippling, that she struggled to leave the house. "I felt incredibly low and had no confidence," she continues. "The first time my husband took me back to my favourite restaurant, where we knew all the staff, I hoped I might feel more comfortable. But, I couldn't cope and ran back to the car and had to sit with a coat over my head."

The Community Support Worker at Jacky's surgery referred her to Stroke Association Support Coordinator Jane Hammond. While talking to Jane, Jacky revealed a love of art, so Jane invited her along to a local stroke survivor art group, Sheffield Touch of Colour, where Jacky now volunteers.

"My grandson took me to my first session because I was so anxious. But the art group turned out to be my saviour. It's opened my life back up and given me the confidence to start going places on my own again."

"Winning this Christmas Card Competition has given me a confidence boost and I feel incredibly proud. My stroke recovery has been a long road, but painting has helped me to feel normal again. When I paint, I immerse myself in the picture, imagining I'm there. In fact, the dog in 'A Winter Scene' is my dog, Frankie, who has been my constant companion throughout my recovery."



To enter the 2020 Christmas card competition, visit stroke.org.uk/cardcomp20.

Our lovely range of gifts and cards, including Jacky's 'A Winter Scene' design, are available from our Christmas shop from Monday 12 August. Visit stroke.org.uk/Christmas or call **01233 214 320** to order.



Money matters



Stroke can have a big impact on your financial situation, especially if you or your loved one is unable to go back to work, so it's important to know what support is available to you. There have been significant changes to benefits in the UK with the introduction of universal credit, a means-tested benefit for people who are unemployed or have a low-income.

What is universal credit?

Universal credit is a payment to help with your living costs if you're on a low income or out of work. It's paid monthly and replaces:

- Child tax credit.
- Housing benefit.
- Income support.
- Income-based jobseeker's allowance (JSA).

- Income-related employment and support allowance (ESA).
- Working tax credit.

If you already claim any of these benefits, you don't need to do anything yet. The Department of Work and Pensions will get in touch with you before there are any changes to your benefits or tax credits.

Am I eligible?

You may be able to claim universal credit if:

- You're on a low income or out of work.
- You're 18 or over.
- You're under pension credit qualifying age (or your partner is).
- You and your partner have less than £16,000 in savings between you.
- You live in the UK.

You can use an online benefits calculator tool (gov.uk/benefits-calculators) to check what benefits you're entitled to. These are free and anonymous to use.

How do I apply?

You can claim for universal credit online via gov.uk/universal-credit.

If you don't use a computer or the internet, contact the universal credit helpline on **0800 328 5644** (text phone: **0800 328 1344**, Welsh language: **0800 328 1744**).



Need help?

The Help To Claim service provided by Citizens Advice can support you to make your universal credit claim.

England and Wales
citizensadvice.org.uk/help-to-claim

Scotland
cas.org.uk/help-to-claim

Northern Ireland
nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/universal-credit



For more information visit understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk.

Puzzles

Puzzles can be a fun way to exercise your mind and improve concentration, understanding and memory.

Word search

L X P Q F X R G E
M L L E F C D R V
M G A E E L F O I
T A Y B I R M U T
R I E U T H S P A
A J B T E O V D E
Q E X L B C O Z R
R M P E K A B F C
T H E R A P Y T Z

FOOTBALL
REBUILD
CREATIVE
THERAPY
HELP

PEERS
GROUP
ART
BAKE
TEAM

Across

- 1 Italian restaurant (9)
- 6 Place (in position) (3)
- 8 Night spot for birds/bats (5)
- 9 Mediterranean island (7)
- 10 Hate (6)
- 12 Planet like the earth (5)
- 13 Great distress (6)
- 14 Medium's meeting (6)
- 17 Inigo —, Eng. architect (5)
- 19 Invented, untrue (4-2)
- 21 Further hearing (7)
- 22 Hooded jacket (5)
- 23 Tree; fire residue (3)
- 24 Heroine of The Hunchback of Notre Dame (9)

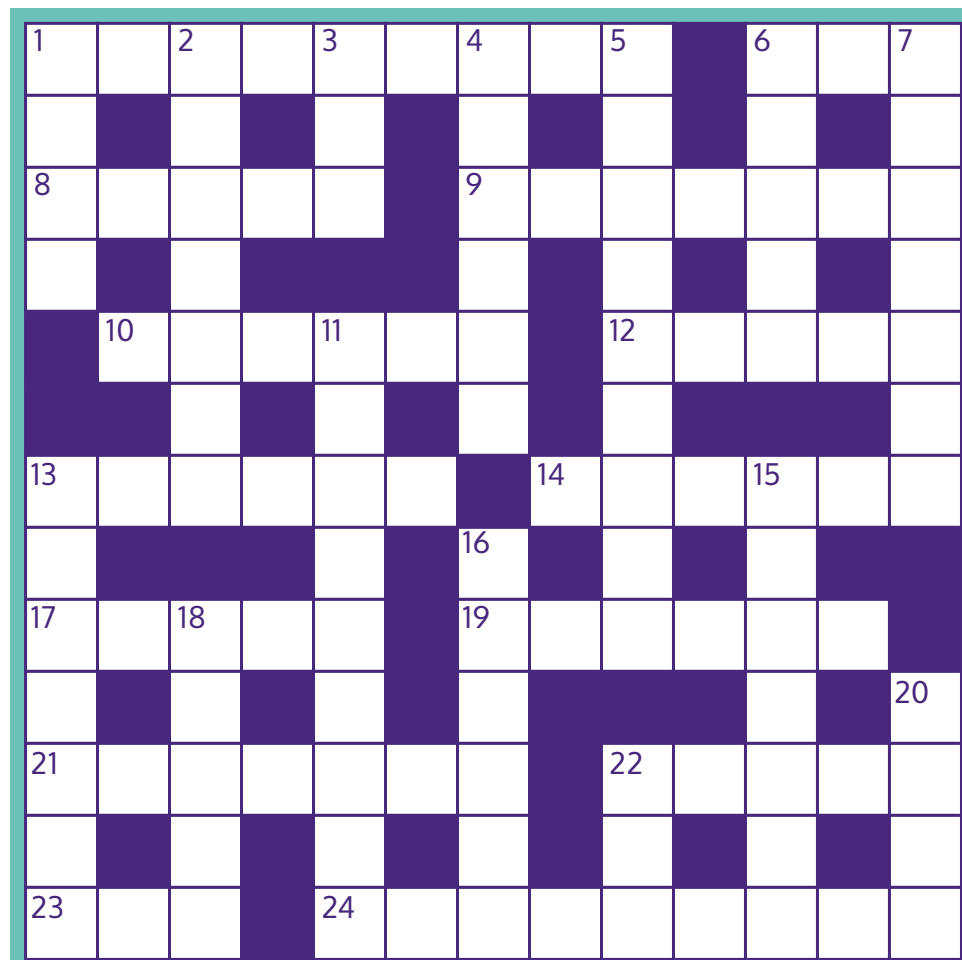
Lottery

For your chance to win £25,000 every week, play the Stroke Association Charity Lottery. Find out more at stroke.zaffo.com.

Down

- 1 Rotate; go (4)
- 2 Showing love (7)
- 3 Small bird (3)
- 4 Firework (6)
- 5 Projectile tip (9)
- 6 Existing before (5)
- 7 Trivial/foolish speech (7)
- 11 Mechanical gate (9)
- 13 Main Balearic island (7)
- 15 Impartial; beige (7)
- 16 Symbol (6)
- 18 Indentation (5)
- 20 Facts, statistics (4)
- 22 Expected number of strokes for hole (golf) (3)

Solutions
see page 46



With thanks to The Times/News Syndication who granted us rights to this crossword.

Rebuilding lives after stroke

Our charity supports people to live the best life they can after stroke. But rebuilding lives is a team effort and we need your help. A huge thank you to everyone who's gone the extra mile to fundraise, volunteer and campaign with us. Your support means we can reach even more people who need us.



Glasgow Kiltwalkers

Congratulations to the 25 #TeamStroke walkers who took part in the Glasgow Kiltwalk in April. Together they raised over £6,000, which was boosted by a further 40% by the event organisers!



Style for Stroke

Long-time Stroke Association supporter and Style For Stroke founder, Nick Ede, has launched a new clothing collection to raise money for and awareness of stroke. To find out more about Style for Stroke and the designs, visit stroke.org.uk/styleforstroke.

How does your donation help?



£5 could help 15 people begin to come to terms with stroke with crucial factsheets.



£20 could support our Stroke Helpline in giving advice to people struggling to cope.



£50 could help us to invest in life-saving stroke research.



Hamilton Underwriting

Thank you to the wonderful staff at Hamilton Underwriting Ltd, who supported us as their charity of the year. From organising cake sales to hosting quizzes, they raised over £3,600.



Find out more on page 46 or make a donation at stroke.org.uk/donation.



Volunteer spotlight

Fundraiser Emma Brown, 41, from Pontypool, has raised £1,600 at her sell-out family quiz. "I asked some friends, including Stroke Association coordinator Luisa Stokes, to help me organise a quiz. Before I knew it, we'd sold 140 tickets. Such great prizes were donated, we had to add in an auction."

The former teacher, now a Stroke Ambassador, is also gathering support as she trains for October's Cardiff Half Marathon. "We've encouraged 15 people to sign up! I'm also planning school events to raise awareness and funds for stroke. I supported our first 2K run for children and it was very rewarding to see them be so enthusiastic."

Find out more about fundraising and volunteering opportunities: stroke.org.uk/yoursupport.

Dates for your diary

Christmas shop opens 10 August - 19 December

Buy Christmas cards, including the design by Jacky, our competition winner (page 38): stroke.org.uk/Christmas19.



Great Birmingham Run 13 October

Contact claire.pell@stroke.org.uk to sign up for one of our charity places.

Royal Parks Half Marathon 13 October

Join #TeamStroke and take on the 13.1-mile route through central London. For details, visit stroke.org.uk/royal-parks or email fundraisingevents@stroke.org.uk.



Supercar Saturday 26 October

Come along to Castle Combe Race Track for a chance to experience thrilling rides in fast cars: stroke.org.uk/supercar.

Give a Hand and Bake 28 October – 3 November

Get baking to support people recovering from stroke: stroke.org.uk/bake.

For more events and ways to get involved in our work, see stroke.org.uk.

Crossword solution

Across:

1 Trattoria, 6 Put, 8 Roost, 9 Corsica, 10 Loathe, 12 World, 13 Misery, 14 Séance, 17 Jones, 19 Made up 21 Retrial, 22 Parka, 23 Ash, 24 Esmeralda

Down:

1 Turn, 2 Amorous, 3 Tit, 4 Rocket, 5 Arrowhead, 6 Prior, 7 Twaddle, 11 Turnstile, 13 Majorca, 15 Neutral, 16 Emblem, 18 Notch, 20 Data, 22 Par

L	X	P	Q	F	X	R	G	E
M	L	L	E	F	C	D	R	V
M	G	A	E	E	L	F	O	I
T	A	Y	B	I	R	M	U	T
R	I	E	U	T	H	S	P	A
A	J	B	T	E	O	V	D	E
Q	E	X	L	B	C	O	Z	R
R	M	P	E	K	A	B	F	C
T	H	E	R	A	P	Y	T	Z

Sign up to #TeamStroke

Edinburgh Marathon Festival

23/24 May 2020

We have charity places available across all Saturday and Sunday events. Secure your place today and help us rebuild more lives after stroke.

For more information contact the Supporter Care Team

Phone: 0300 330 0740 Email: supportercare@stroke.org.uk

Enter online: stroke.org.uk/edinburghmarathon

Rebuilding lives after stroke

Stroke
Association

