

StrokeNews

SUMMER 2015

For everyone affected by stroke

My second chance at life

Golden rules
for employers

Our stroke and work campaign

The power of music

Could singing help you?

Stroke researchers

Meet the next generation

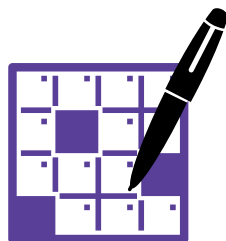
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Stroke
association

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We're the leading stroke charity in the UK. We're here for you:



Stroke Helpline

Call confidentially on **0303 3033 100**.



Life After Stroke Services

Find support in your area at **stroke.org.uk/local-support**



Clubs and groups

provide a lifeline.

See **stroke.org.uk/clubs**



Free factsheets guide you through all aspects of stroke.

See **stroke.org.uk/resources**



TalkStroke and befriending

Talk to others affected by stroke online or in person. See **stroke.org.uk**



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Welcome...

In your summer edition we're celebrating the courage of stroke survivors. People like Pete, on page nine, who now makes every day count and is committed to helping others whose lives have been turned upside down by stroke.

Life After Stroke Award winner Pete has difficulty communicating since his stroke. It's often the less visible effects, like speaking problems, fatigue and the emotional impact of stroke which are hardest to deal with.

Our Q&A on page 22 can offer help with the emotional impact of stroke, and on page six, hear the difference a Communication Support Group made to Paul. Our *Work and Stroke Campaign* is helping employers better understand these effects. Find out more and read Rebecca's amazing return to work on page 19.

I hope these stories offer you inspiration.

Alex Bolton
Editor



Can you help?

We're facing increasing costs to produce and send *Stroke News* to you for free.

Stroke News is a lifeline to thousands of people affected by stroke and we'd like to continue making it available to everyone who benefits from it.

If you can help, please donate at stroke.org.uk/strokenews-donate or call **01604 687 777**. As a charity, we rely on your support.

Thank you.



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Your views

Over to you



Readers' tips

Many people affected by stroke become depressed. One way to help is to get out using a mobility scooter. However, the problem is how to get on a bus. There is usually little space to manoeuvre and bus companies only offer one hour's training. I would be interested to hear how others have dealt with this problem.



Margaret Read

When my dad was in hospital, very poorly and unable to speak, the best way to speak to one another was using a board and pencil.



Mr C Foulkes

Since my two strokes, I have always enjoyed *Stroke News*, but I felt I had to write to say how much I like the new format of the magazine. It is so much easier to hold with the content as good as ever! Thanks to all involved and long may it last.



Melvyn Jackson

Congratulations on the new size of *Stroke News*. It is much easier to handle as my stroke in 2012 affected all of my right side. Once a fortnight I go to a stroke club. It is a super club. We have volunteer helpers who greet us with tea, coffee and biscuits. We do exercises followed by playing games, lunch and then a speaker or film. I still enjoy life at the age of 87.



Audrey Buggard

Do you have a tip or something to share?



Write to us at Stroke News, Stroke Association House, 240 City Road, London, EC1V 2PR or email strokenews@stroke.org.uk

Reducing **your** stroke risk

Around 20% of the UK population smokes - yet smoking single-handedly doubles your risk of dying from a stroke.

Stopping smoking isn't easy but there's lots of support to help you from services to advice on the phone and online. Visit **www.nhs.uk/smokefree** to find your local support and join thousands of others in this year's Stoptober campaign to quit this October.

Did you know?

Inhaling tobacco contains more than 7,000 toxic chemicals which can damage cells around your body and increase stroke risk.

Inhaling carbon monoxide can damage artery walls and affect the stickiness of blood making it more likely to clot and lead to stroke.

Our tips to help you quit

1. Set a date to stop and stick with it.
2. Write a list of reasons you want to stop. Read it when you start to feel tempted to smoke.
3. Get support from friends, family, NHS stop smoking services and your GP.
4. Have a plan to cope with cravings. Try to distract your hand by doodling or do a crossword, brush your teeth, have a shower or call a friend.

For our factsheet about smoking and stroke see:

stroke.org.uk/smoking

Living with communication problems

When Paul Hodson from Edinburgh had a stroke aged 51 he couldn't read or write or say more than a short sentence. Numbers were lost to him which meant the end of his career as a finance manager.

Paul has aphasia, a communication disability caused by damage to the language centres of the brain. But eight years on, he's still making improvements every day. He credits his determination and meeting others with the condition with helping.





"I'm bloody-minded and refuse to give up. I read every day and have built up to six pages. My speech can be slow but I can now have a normal conversation. I can't write more than a list or short sentence, but I've adapted. I use Dragon Dictation speech recognition software which lets me speak and instantly see my words as an email. It's slow progress but I'm improving all the time."

Aphasia can be a frustrating and isolating disability, but support is on hand. Paul goes to the monthly Edinburgh Speakability Group and finds it an invaluable lifeline.

"Being able to chat to others who know what it's like helps. We take trips and it's a nice chance to relax with people who understand."

Aphasia can be a frustrating and isolating disability, but support is on hand.

What is aphasia?

- Damage to the language centres of the brain 
- It causes problems speaking and understanding what others are saying 
- Many people who have aphasia also have problems with reading or writing 
- It affects around a third of stroke survivors. 

Expanding aphasia support



In April, the Stroke Association merged with Speakability, the national charity supporting people with aphasia. Together, we can now provide more than 120 vital communication groups across the UK.

See **speakability.org.uk** for aphasia awareness materials. To find support in your area call the Stroke Helpline on **0303 3033 100**.

Conversation tips for carers

- ✓ Use short sentences and ask one question at a time.
- ✓ Say when you don't understand – it's not a problem, they may just need to try it again.
- ✓ Communication is more than speech - point to things, gesture, write, draw, or sing.
- ✗ Don't rush.
- ✗ Don't finish sentences or guess what someone is trying to say.
- ✗ Don't forget you're talking to an adult who has problems with their communication, not their intelligence.

See our new factsheet at **stroke.org.uk/communication**

Congratulations to our 2015 Christmas Card Competition winner

Philip James had his first stroke in February 2005. As well as badly affecting his walking and balance, he experienced depression which meant that he rarely left the house.

Following a further stroke, Philip was encouraged by his family to go along to one of the Stroke Association's Stroke Groups, and he now epitomises 'Life After Stroke'. He gets enormous satisfaction from attending the Stroke Association's art classes and photography group, and he has a wonderful talent – which was recognised when he won this year's bespoke Christmas card competition.



His winning card – *Christmas Sparkle* – is available to buy alongside other fantastic cards and gifts in the Christmas catalogue that you'll find with this issue of *Stroke News*.

You'll also see how to enter the 2016 competition.



Enter by 29 January.

My second chance at life

Pete Groombridge was 60 when he had a devastating stroke which left him unable to walk or talk. But he now sees life in a whole new light.

He's thrown himself into volunteering and out of a plane to help others whose lives have been turned upside down by stroke.

Pete's stroke should never have happened. But he'd never had his blood pressure checked and he'd never registered with a GP. He felt healthy and did 'his bit' walking the dog every day. He didn't realise the 'funny turns' he'd experienced were mini-strokes and a warning he was at risk of a major stroke.

A devastating stroke

Feeling strange one day, Pete pulled over while driving. "I rang my wife, Maureen, but no words came out. I don't remember anything until two and a half weeks later," said Pete.

Maureen rang 999. Not knowing where he was, the emergency services had to track Pete using his mobile phone signal. He was rushed to hospital and put into an induced coma to protect his brain from swelling. Maureen was told he might not come round.

The road to recovery

Thankfully Pete pulled through but he couldn't walk or talk. "My life changed in an instant. I mourned for my independence and it was exhausting learning to communicate again," remembers Pete. "But I didn't give up. I could have died or been affected much worse, so I saw my life as a second chance and gave everything to getting better." ▶



"My life changed in an instant in a lot of ways."



Helping others

"After my stroke, meeting others in the same boat helped enormously. I cherished my visits to a Stroke Association Communication Group. As soon as I was well enough, it felt natural to want to help others in the way I'd been helped."

So, a year after his stroke, Pete began volunteering for the Stroke Association. Soon, he was helping at every Stroke Club in East Kent as well as visiting people in hospital, giving presentations about stroke and checking blood pressures at events. He recently set up a new Stroke Club in Dover.

Pete's support hasn't stopped there. Fifteen months after learning to walk again, he took on a challenging 20km walk and in 2011 he sky dived, raising more than £2,000 to help our work.

"Although I had a full life before my stroke, I do more now to prove that I can. I'm more available to my family and my community."

The recognition he deserves

In June, Pete won the Adult Courage (65+) Life After Stroke Award. Tara Galloway at the Stroke Association said: "Pete goes above and beyond for stroke survivors every day. He's a truly worthy winner."

Life After Stroke Awards 2015

The Life After Stroke Awards recognise the outstanding achievements of everyone affected by stroke.

With more than 550 worthy nominations, our judges had their work cut out.

And the winners are...



Special Recognition Award

Professor Pippa Tyrrell

Professor Tyrrell was the first stroke physician to be appointed in Manchester in 1995. Driven by a desire to bring life-saving stroke treatments to patients, she's worked tirelessly to transform services in the region.

Corporate Supporter of the Year

Royal Mail

A year into our Charity of the Year partnership and Royal Mail staff have shown incredible support from sponsored fun runs to zip wiring over the River Tyne to help fund 10,000 Life After Stroke Grants.





Fundraiser of the Year Award Annabel Jones

In 2011, 22 year old Annabel's vision suddenly disappeared. She'd suffered a stroke. Three years later she ran a half marathon with her colleagues, raising £40,000 for us.

Professional Excellence Award Margaret Mitchell MBE

Community Nurse and Stroke Liaison Team Leader Margaret has spent the past 45 years in nursing. She's transformed the lives of stroke survivors in and around Dundee.



Stroke Group Award Merseyside Life After Stroke Group

Set up 20 years ago, The Merseyside Life After Stroke voluntary led group runs arts, creative writing, poetry, social media, and Thai Chi sessions to help more than 50 members.

Award for Volunteering Rik Thornton

Rik became his wife's full-time carer after her stroke. After attending our Long Term Support Group in Downham, he's been relentlessly giving awareness talks at schools and events.



Award for Creative Arts Lil Sullivan, London

Lil had a life-threatening stroke in 2007. Art was an important part of her rehabilitation. She set up the London Stroke Action Council and curated an exhibition to raise funds for us.



Children and Young People's Courage Award Emily Simpson

Emily had a stroke at the age of 10. Her parents were told she might not make it. But she's fought back and is now training for the Great North Children's race.

Adult Courage Award (18-64 years old) Mark Ellis

Mark was 22 and his daughter only just born when he had a stroke which left him with locked-in syndrome. He's learned to walk and eat again by mimicking his baby daughter.



Adult Courage Award (65 years+) Peter Groombridge

In 2007 Peter had a severe stroke and was hospitalised for more than six months. He's shown amazing courage and goes above and beyond to help other stroke survivors.

Carer's Award William Hyde, Lichfield

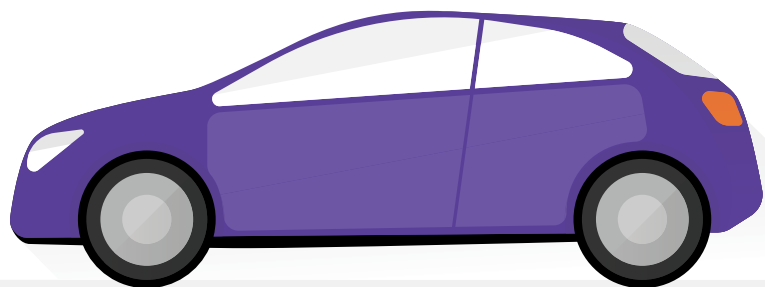
When his mum had a severe stroke, William deferred university to focus on caring for her. While working, he managed her medication, physiotherapy and cooked and cleaned.



To find out more about our amazing winners, see stroke.org.uk/lasa
Special thanks to Toni&Guy, our Life After Stroke Awards 2015 sponsor.

TONI & GUY
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Do you have an old car?



Your old car could help conquer stroke. Giveacar is an award-winning social enterprise that has raised thousands of pounds for the Stroke Association through the recycling and scrapping of old cars with the proceeds going to the charity.

Giveacar provides a FREE nationwide service and:

- Arranges the collection of your old car from your home
- Depending on its age and condition, recycles it at an authorised facility or sends it to auction.



For more information contact Giveacar on **0207 736 4242** or visit **giveacar.co.uk** and quote 'the Stroke Association.'

Feature

A marathon effort

Berni Cooper from Wakefield was caring for her 14-month-old son when she had a stroke, aged 30. She feared she'd never walk again. But, just four years on, she's run two marathons for the Stroke Association.

"I remember collapsing," said Berni. "All I could think about was being there to see my son grow up, to be able to cuddle him and walk him to school. I dragged myself across the room to call 999."

The stroke paralysed Berni's left side but she was determined to get better. In hospital, she made a list of goals to keep her recovery on track. Top of the list was a marathon. It took a year to get over the overwhelming exhaustion, but four years on she's run two marathons to give back for the support she's received.

Berni won our competition to run the 2015 London Marathon dressed as a Pink Lady® apple. She said, "My marathon experience was amazing. I feared I'd never walk again let alone run and I now value every step I take."

**"I now value every
step I take."**



Interested in taking on a running event for the Stroke Association? See **stroke.org.uk** for events all over the UK.

Together we can conquer stroke

We rely on your support to prevent stroke and change lives. A huge thanks to everyone who's gone the extra mile to fundraise, volunteer and campaign for us.



1,687 individuals and organisations signed up to Make May Purple in Action on Stroke Month 2015



Thousands of you have been taking part in Step Out for Stroke events all over the UK



Find out what events we've got coming up on page 39 or make a donation at stroke.org.uk/donation

Volunteer spotlight

Saida Lemnezzah provides administration support in our North West office. She's become an invaluable part of the team.

Saida came to England in the early 1980s speaking no English. When she graduated from university, volunteering wasn't top of her list of priorities. But through volunteering she feels she's developed her communication skills, IT skills and her ability to work as part of a team.

"Can I see myself volunteering for life? The answer is yes! This is my gateway to the workforce."



How does your donation help?

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

£20 could support our Stroke Helpline to give life-changing advice to people struggling to cope.

£50 could help us continue to invest in research which prevents stroke and improves the lives of stroke survivors.

What will you get from volunteering with the Stroke Association?

- An induction and training to help you to achieve in your role
- Valuable work experience to help your professional and personal development
- Satisfaction from offering your time, skills and experience to help people affected by stroke.

Find out more at stroke.org.uk/take-action



Working age stroke

Strokes occurring in people between 40 and 54 have increased dramatically in the last 15 years by nearly 50% in men and nearly 30% in women.

We found many employers don't understand the effects of stroke; just one in 20 recognised cognitive difficulties, like fatigue and memory problems. This can hold stroke survivors back from returning to work. But if an employer is supportive, it can play a crucial role in helping them on the road to recovery.

Rebecca's story

Rebecca Nightingale was 44 when she had a stroke out of the blue. She lost the movement in her right side and it took two months to walk without a frame. She felt tired all the time and her mood was low.

Rebecca worked in Collateral Management for a large bank in Canary Wharf. It was a high pressured job with long hours. Getting back to work was one of her main concerns.

Just one in 20 employers recognised the cognitive effects of stroke.

"I was worried my boss wouldn't understand," said Rebecca. "As the breadwinner, I felt a lot of financial pressure and I didn't want to rely on other people."

Thankfully, Rebecca's employer did everything possible to help, and with support from the Stroke Association's Back to Work Service, she's back at work and thriving.

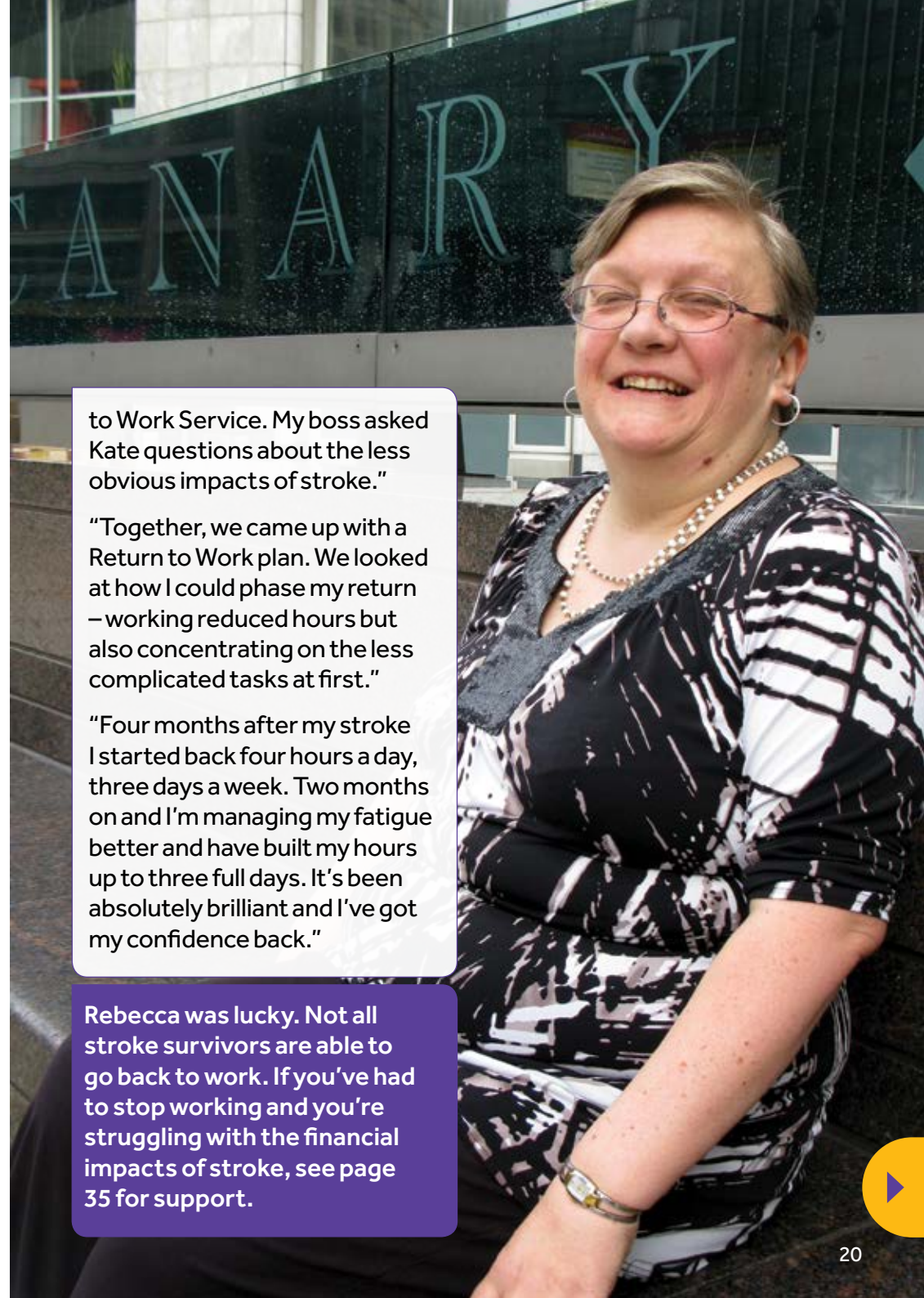
"My workplace was amazing – they were really keen to make sure I had all the support I needed. As soon as I got the go ahead from my doctor, I arranged a meeting with my boss and Kate from the Back

to Work Service. My boss asked Kate questions about the less obvious impacts of stroke."

"Together, we came up with a Return to Work plan. We looked at how I could phase my return – working reduced hours but also concentrating on the less complicated tasks at first."

"Four months after my stroke I started back four hours a day, three days a week. Two months on and I'm managing my fatigue better and have built my hours up to three full days. It's been absolutely brilliant and I've got my confidence back."

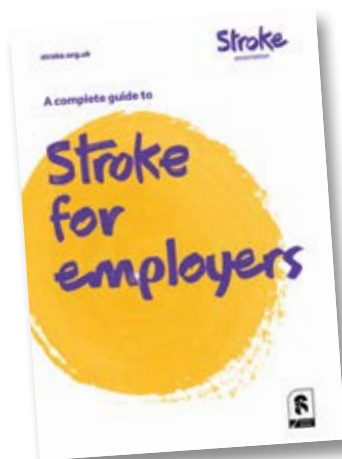
Rebecca was lucky. Not all stroke survivors are able to go back to work. If you've had to stop working and you're struggling with the financial impacts of stroke, see page 35 for support.



Golden rules for employers

With the right support, stroke survivors can, and do, return to work, but too many face an uphill battle. We've written *A complete guide to stroke for employers* to increase employers' awareness of stroke and their responsibilities. Here are a few of the golden rules it sets out:

1. **Ask the expert** – don't be afraid to ask your employee about the best way to support them.
2. **Don't make assumptions** – no two strokes are the same. Some people will have visible disabilities; others will have 'hidden' disabilities.
3. **Respect privacy** – your employee may not want to disclose a disability to others.
4. **Check your organisation's guidelines and agreements** – such as sickness pay arrangements and policies on absence.
5. **Ask about financial support** – the Access to Work scheme might be relevant.



Take action!

Download our full golden rules at stroke.org.uk/work and forward it to your employer, or, if you're not working, to someone who is, to increase employer understanding of stroke.

If you're in London, our Back to Work Service can help employers and employees. Visit stroke.org.uk/back-to-work for more details.

Emotional changes after stroke

A stroke is a sudden, life-changing event, so it's normal to feel emotional, anxious, angry or depressed. These 'hidden' effects are often harder to cope with because they're not immediately obvious to those around us and they can be hard to explain.

Rhian Thompson from our Stroke Helpline explains what help's available.

Q Why do I feel different after my stroke?

Anger, shock, anxiety and depression are all common feelings. They can be the result of damage to your brain caused by the stroke, but you might also be grieving for the life you lost unexpectedly or feel angry at not being able to do the things you used to. These are all normal reactions.

Q Will I get better?

When emotions are overwhelming, it can be easy to think they'll never get better. But they do. Even if they don't completely go away, they can improve over time with help and support.

Call our Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100.



Q What can help?

➔ Some people find keeping active helps. It doesn't have to be marathon running, but gardening, regular walks or chair-based exercises can help your mood.

➔ Try giving yourself goals to work towards. Focus on the things you can do and track your progress in a journal.

➔ Art, music, photography and poetry can give you a way to express feelings.

➔ Share your feelings with others who have experienced the same thing. Find your local Stroke Club or Group at stroke.org.uk/local-support

Q Are there treatments?

There are lots of treatments available. Every stroke is different and no two people will have the exact same experience so it's important you tell your doctor if you are concerned.

Talking therapy lets you explore how you're feeling with a trained specialist. Your GP may refer you to a counsellor, psychotherapist, psychiatrist or psychologist.

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) focuses on how your thinking and behaviour are connected to help you manage negative thoughts.

Medication might be recommended by your doctor. Antidepressants are the most well-known to help with emotions. They will not cure problems but can help with the symptoms.

- A third of people experience depression after a stroke



- One in five people have difficulty controlling their mood and emotions



- Only one in five people receive the support to cope with the emotional impact of stroke.



For more information about emotional problems see our complete guide at stroke.org.uk/emotional-changes-guide

Building the next generation of research leaders

"Why me?" is naturally one of the first questions anyone who's had a stroke asks. But to understand stroke fully – who it affects, how and why – can only be achieved with research.

Sadly, stroke research is severely underfunded. While governments and charities invest £241 in research per year for every cancer patient, it's just £48 per stroke patient.

That's why we're investing in the next generation of stroke research leaders - people with brilliant ideas and a passion for preventing and minimising the impacts of stroke.

Cancer



Stroke



- Stroke is the second greatest cause of death worldwide



- Stroke is the biggest cause of complex disability worldwide



- There are 1.2m people living with the effects of stroke in the UK



- The burden of stroke is set to double worldwide by the year 2030



Research can change this. We're calling on governments, funders and the public to increase investment in stroke.

We recently announced the winners of our first ever programme to fund university lectureship positions in stroke research. These have been awarded to a group of highly skilled researchers, hungry to change the future of stroke. Here's an insight into the research they're taking forward.



Dr Audrey Bowen, University of Manchester, is designing and testing therapies for people with cognitive problems (like difficulties with concentration and remembering things).



Dr Nele Demeyere, Lecturer in Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford, is improving cognitive assessments so treatments can be targeted better.



Dr Phil Clatworthy, Research Associate in Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, is researching the best rehabilitation for people with vision loss, affecting tens of thousands of people a year across the UK.



Dr Fergus Doubal, Honorary Senior Lecturer, University of Edinburgh and Consultant Stroke Physician, is examining why small vessel disease – one of the least understood areas of stroke, happens and why it causes stroke and dementia.



Dr Terence Quinn, Clinical Lecturer in Geriatric Medicine, University of Glasgow, is improving how to identify and treat emotional, thinking and memory changes after stroke.



Dr Nele Demeyere is improving outcomes for people with cognitive problems.

We caught up with one of the awardees to find out a bit more about their research.



What do you hope will be the outcome of your research?

I'm researching how current cognitive assessments, which involve testing patients' abilities to carry out tasks about language and numbers, links to everyday tasks, like dressing or making a cup of tea. More meaningful assessments will ensure targeted treatments and doctors can offer patients a more realistic idea of their likely cognitive recovery.



Why is stroke important to you?

Stroke is devastating and is a leading cause of disability. I've been inspired by the determination of

stroke survivors I've met to recover and adapt to their new situation.



Why did you want to become a researcher in this particular area of stroke?

Working with patients during my PhD shifted my interest from understanding mechanisms to wanting to do something to improve outcomes for patients with memory or thinking problems.

You can make a difference

You can support stroke research by giving what you can at stroke.org.uk/donation or by calling 0300 330 0740.

The art of recovery

A stroke in 2013 forced keen sailor Les Harland, 64, to give up his beloved hobby. But, having never picked up a paintbrush in his life, he's found comfort painting seascapes at his local Stroke Club, improving his mobility and his confidence.

"I'd been at sea all afternoon on my own, just like most days that summer. Thankfully, I'd just got back to shore, when I was tying up the boat and everything just went sideways."

Les' stroke meant he lost all movement in his right side. He couldn't walk more than a few steps, and he couldn't speak.



"Finding my local Stroke Club turned things around."

"Nothing was the same," remembers Les. "Suddenly I had to rely on my wife for everything. We felt very alone."

"Finding my local Stroke Association Stroke Club turned things around for us. We've met people going through the same thing. Painting has helped me learn to use my left hand and made me realise I can still take on something new."

Do you help run a Stroke Club?

The Stroke Club Conference is on 9 and 10 October. Book before 1 September to attend this special event, now in its tenth year. Learn about support available for your group and share ideas with others. See stroke.org.uk/club-conference for more information.

The power of music

Research has shown that people who've lost their ability to communicate following a stroke can make improvements by singing. It's believed the melody can help the brain 'rewire' itself, bypassing the damaged regions and improving communication.

Following strokes, Andy Lawson, 63, and Linda Halliwell, 72, have been severely affected by aphasia. They both rely heavily on their partners to communicate. Despite struggling to speak, they never miss their monthly sessions at the Stroke Association Singing

Group at the Life After Stroke Centre in Bromsgrove, where they regularly perform solos and duets.

Andy enjoyed many years in his church choir before his stroke. His wife Lyn said "Andy finds singing a lot less pressurised than speaking. He doesn't have to think about putting a sentence together or concentrating on what the other person is saying. Words he usually struggles to say in conversation are easier to sing."

"I find singing a lot less pressurised than speaking."

Linda had never sung before her stroke five years ago. For anyone who doesn't know her, her speech can be very hard to follow. Sometimes her partner of 37 years, Barry, has difficulties.

She said "Singing makes me feel very happy." Barry felt this was partly due to the choice of songs that the singing group sings. He said: "They tend to be well-known songs that are etched in the memory from across the years." He added "Joining the group has really helped Linda's confidence and she's formed some fantastic friendships."

What's the research tell us?

The discovery that people with speech and language problems



are often able to sing text fluently has inspired a number of music-based rehabilitation programmes, including Melodic Intonation Therapy. Some people find talking in melodically intoned phrases easier.

But it's not just singing that some people believe can help stroke rehabilitation. Researchers at Goldsmith's University found that playing an instrument has the potential to help stroke survivors with neglect - damage to one side of the brain causing spatial awareness problems on the opposite side. Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1HqtlH5>

Singing familiar songs can be emotionally uplifting for all of us. Find support near you at stroke.org.uk/local-support

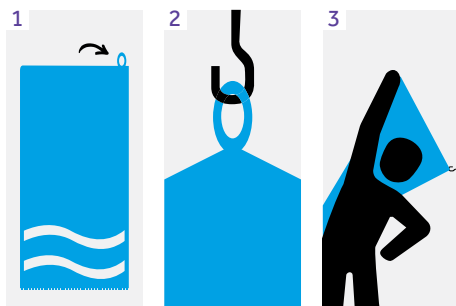
Adapting to upper limb mobility problems

More than three-quarters of stroke survivors experience upper limb weakness. Many see improvements with therapy, but some people may need to find equipment or different ways to manage everyday tasks.

Here are some bathing and dressing tips:

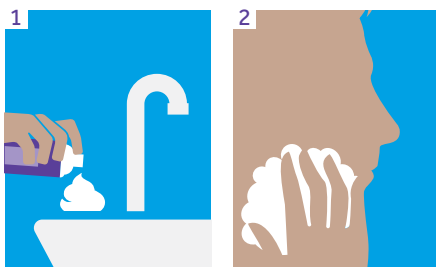
1 Drying yourself after bathing

- Use towels with loop tags, or ask someone to sew them on
- Attach loop to a hook to fix one end of the towel
- Pull taut across your back.



2 Shaving

- Spray shaving cream on the side of the sink and apply it to your face with your working hand.



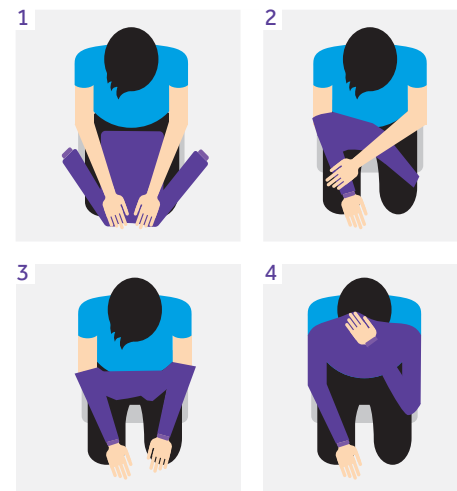
3 Brushing teeth

- Put toothbrush on a hard surface with the bristles facing up
- Apply toothpaste. Flip tops lids can be easier than screw top.



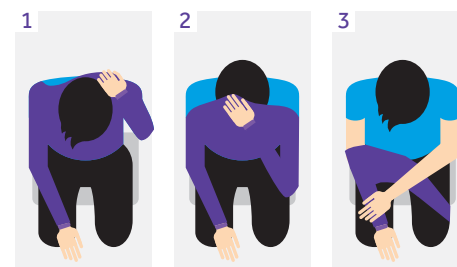
4 Putting on a jumper, dress or shirt

- Lay garment on your knees with the back facing up and neck furthest away
- Put affected arm down the sleeve and pull sleeve up past elbow
- Put strong arm into other sleeve and pull up, over your head.



5 Removing upper garments

- Gather clothes up from the back of the neck
- Pull over the head
- Then release arms.



Quick switches

- Try shampoo and conditioner dispensers with pumps
- Try shoes with Velcro fasteners to avoid tying shoelaces
- Some people find sports bras easier to put on and take off
- Elasticated trousers or trousers with buttons can be easier to avoid tricky clasps.



No two strokes are the same.
An Occupational Therapist can advise on the best products and adaptations for you.

See *Occupational Therapy and Stroke* by Judi Edmans for more tips.



Product watch

If you have upper limb mobility problems, there are lots of products to help with everyday tasks like cooking and eating.



Opening containers - use electric tin openers, mounted jar openers or a belliclamp for opening jars and bottles.

A single handed chopping board (also known as a spike board) can help you prepare meals.



A rocker knife can help cut prepared food, including meat which can be difficult to cut with one hand.

A wire mesh cooking basket can help you avoid lifting heavy pans and needing to drain vegetables and pasta.



Visit [EquipStroke](http://EquipStroke.org.uk) to see a range of products to suit your needs at asksara.dlf.org.uk

Paying for products and adaptations

Talk to your OT about what's available through the NHS. If there are products you need which are not covered, you might be eligible for a Stroke Association Life After Stroke Grant. Visit stroke.org.uk/grants or call the Stroke Helpline on **0303 3033 100**.

Getting back my independence

A year ago, Jabeen Mitha, 56, from Newport in South Wales, was the first beneficiary of 10,000 Life After Stroke Grants that Royal Mail is funding for the Stroke Association. A year on, she reflects on the difference it's made to her life.

Jabeen woke one morning feeling numb. "I remember thinking I might have cramp, but the more time that passed, the more the numbness in my face worried me. I recognised some of the FAST symptoms from the TV ads and decided to see my GP."

Jabeen's GP sent her straight to a specialist stroke unit where she was diagnosed with a transient ischaemic attack (TIA), also known as a mini-stroke. A TIA has the same symptoms as a stroke but they last less than 24 hours. Jabeen was soon allowed home but she had difficulties with her mobility.

"I really struggled to move around the house and suddenly very everyday things, like sitting down at the table to have a family meal, weren't possible because I was too uncomfortable and would have to go and lie down in another room."

Jabeen couldn't afford adaptations to her home, but her local Stroke Association co-ordinator, Anna Markall, told her about Life After Stroke Grants. Anna helped her apply for funding for a Rise and Recline Chair to help her move between sitting and standing on her own, giving her more independence.

A year on, Jabeen said "A chair seems such a small thing but it's changed my life. Before, I couldn't get to bed because I couldn't climb the stairs but the chair means I can sleep downstairs. I can also join in with family activities in the living room. I can stay in my chair with them when I start to get tired. I can't thank the Stroke Association and staff at Royal Mail enough for helping."

Do you need financial help?
Find out more about Stroke Association grants and apply at stroke.org.uk/grants or call the Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100.

One year on



We're a year into our fantastic two year partnership with Royal Mail. Royal Mail staff are raising money from fun runs to zip wire challenges to raise £2 million to fund Life After Stroke Grants over the next five years.

Life After Stroke Grants provide a lifeline to stroke survivors and their families who are most in need. They help pay for anything from household appliances to training courses to get back into work.

"A chair seems such a small thing but it's changed my life."



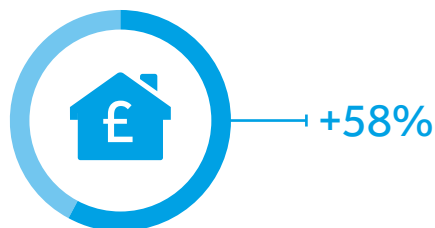
Money matters

During *Action on Stroke Month*, we launched our stroke and work campaign. We know that with the right support and care many stroke survivors return to work, but for a substantial number, the disabilities caused by stroke mean returning to work isn't possible.

If you need any information on benefits call our Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100.



Stroke has a sudden and unexpected effect on working people's finances. Expenses go up and income can go down. The whole family can be affected as partners find it difficult to combine work with caring responsibilities.



Many people struggle with the financial pressure of stroke. Our research shows household expenses increased by 58%, including heating bills and transport costs, costs of care and adaptations.

The main benefits available for stroke survivors under pensionable age are:

1. Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). ESA is a

benefit for people who are ill or disabled. You will have a Work Capability Assessment to see to what extent your illness or disability affects your ability to work.

If you're entitled to the benefit you will be placed in one of two groups:

- Work-related activity group, where you'll have regular interviews with an adviser to help you find a job
- Support group, where you don't have interviews and you're not expected to look for work.

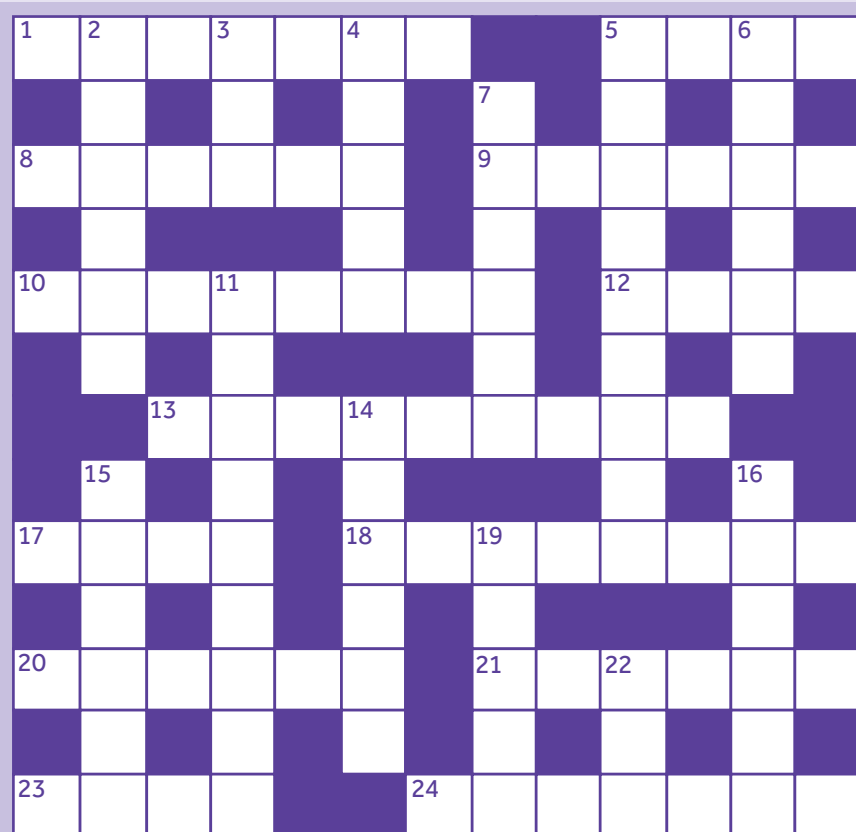
2. Personal Independence Payment (PIP) has replaced

Disability Living Allowance. It is not means tested so it can be claimed whether you are working or not and is designed to meet the extra costs of disability.

3. Carer's Allowance is another important benefit. It's designed to help you look after someone with substantial caring needs. You don't have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for but you must spend at least 35 hours a week caring for them. Carer's Allowance is taxable and can affect your other benefits.

Puzzles

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



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

Across

- 1 Relating to heat (7)
- 5 Drive out (4)
- 8 Without delay (6)
- 9 Concept, belief (6)
- 10 Cause (someone) to believe (8)
- 12 Bovine animals (4)
- 13 Have a very beneficial effect (2,7)
- 17 Large clumsy person; stripped ship (4)
- 18 Disorder involving words (8)
- 20 Filled with horror (6)
- 21 Semitic language (6)
- 23 Real; loyal (4)
- 24 Small falcon (7)

Down

- 2 Large wasp (6)
- 3 Flow; manage (3)
- 4 Distinctive smell (5)
- 5 Contract to an external supplier (9)
- 6 Brief fall of rain (6)
- 7 Dracula-like (6)
- 11 Check on shop holdings (9)
- 14 Strange person/thing (6)
- 15 Lacking in good taste (6)
- 16 Limited in size (6)
- 19 Pomp; nation (5)
- 22 Suitable (3)

Solutions
See page 39
for the puzzle
solutions.

Word search

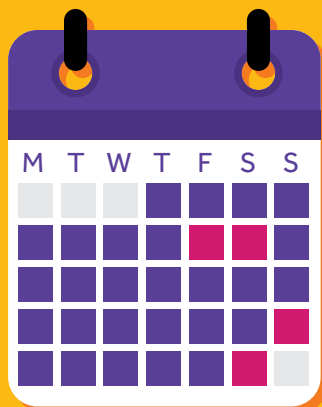
R	S	I	N	G	I	N	G	H
H	E	L	P	L	I	N	E	C
A	N	E	D	D	I	H	O	R
M	I	H	T	T	C	U	K	A
B	V	S	N	N	R	O	R	E
T	U	I	A	A	U	Z	T	S
E	A	L	G	H	G	L	R	E
P	D	E	C	V	P	Z	O	R
N	O	H	T	A	R	A	M	V

APHASIA
CLUB
COURAGE
HELPLINE
HIDDEN
MARATHON
PAINTING
RESEARCH
SINGING
VOLUNTEER

Dates for your diary

Stroke Club Conference, Nottingham 9-10 October

Book before 1 September for the 10th anniversary of this very popular and special event to help you run a Stroke Club. For more information see stroke.org.uk/club-conference



The Great South Run, Portsmouth 25 October

This fantastic 10 miler goes through the historic dockyard, passed HMS Victory. To sign up, email gssr@stroke.org.uk or call Lauren on **02380 720423**.

Supercar Saturday, Castle Combe circuit, Wiltshire 31 October

A special day for Motor Sport fans. For more information contact amy.spencer@stroke.org.uk or call **01179 111493**.

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

Crossword

Across: 1 THERMAL, 5 OUST, 8 PRONTO, 9 NOTION, 10 PERSUADE, 12 OXEN, 13 DOWONDERS, 17 HULK, 18 DYSLEXIA, 20 AGHAST, 21 ARABIC, 23 TRUE, 24 KESTREL

Down: 2 HORNET, 3 RUN, 4 AROMA, 5 OUTSOURCE, 6 SHOWER, 7 UNDEAD, 11 STOCKTAKE, 14 ODDITY, 15 VULGAR, 16 FINITE, 19 STATE, 22 APT

R	S	I	N	G	I	N	G	H
H	E	L	P	L	I	N	E	C
A	N	E	D	D	I	H	O	R
+	I	+	T	T	+	U	+	A
B	+	S	N	N	R	+	+	E
+	U	I	A	A	U	+	+	S
+	A	L	G	H	G	L	+	E
P	+	E	C	+	P	+	O	R
N	O	H	T	A	R	A	M	V