



Unlocking potential:

A bold vision for stroke care in England

Accessible summary

Stroke
Association

Finding **strength** through **support**



By **2035**, the number of **stroke survivors** in England is expected to **double**.

Many people will be living with **long-term disability** and will be **unable** to **return to work**.

Stroke care has improved but **not everyone** has **equal access**.



The Government must **take quick action** if it wants to meet its **2035 goal** to **reduce deaths** from heart attack and stroke by **25%**.

Strong Government leadership is important.

Policies should **focus** on:

- Doing more to stop strokes' before they happen.
- More technology in stroke care.
- Strengthening stroke care in communities.



England's **10-Year Health Plan** is a chance to **improve stroke care**.

Stroke is **preventable, treatable** and **recoverable**.



We need to act now to create a **better stroke pathway**.

The **stroke pathway** is the person's complete journey from experiencing stroke symptoms, getting treatment, to supporting recovery afterwards and preventing further strokes.



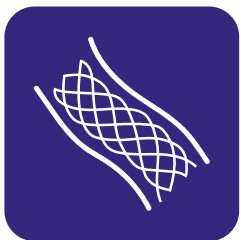
The care you get should not depend on where you live.

Up to **20%** of **stroke patients** could **benefit** from the stroke treatment **thrombolysis**.



Thrombolysis is a treatment that uses **medication** to **break apart blood clots** and help blood flow normally again.

In 2023/24, **only 11.6%** of **stroke patients** got this **treatment** across England.



About **15% of stroke patients** can get the stroke treatment **thrombectomy**.

Thrombectomy is when a doctor **removes a blood clot** to help blood flow normally again.

But **not everyone** who can receive this **treatment** gets it.

In **London**, **10.3%** of stroke patients got this treatment.

In the North East and Yorkshire, **2.28%** of patients got this treatment.



Only **17% of community services** have the right access to essential therapies.

This includes **physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, and occupational therapy**.

Stroke: an overview



A **stroke** happens **every five minutes**.

100,000 people have strokes **each year**.

1 in 4 stroke survivors will have **another stroke** within five years.



1 in 4 strokes happen to people of **working age**.

Strokes are **rising fastest** in people aged **under 55**.



1 in 7 stroke patients **die** in hospital.

Around **60%** of stroke patients **leave hospital** with a **disability**.



42% of stroke survivors **struggle** with **daily tasks**.

75% of stroke survivors experience a **change** in their **mental health**.



1 in 3 survivors have **aphasia**.

Aphasia **affects language**. It can make it hard to speak, read, write or understand words.



Stroke does **not** affect everyone **equally**.

People from **poorer backgrounds** often have their first stroke around **seven years earlier** than those from more wealthy backgrounds.



In **2035** the stroke **cost** to the Government will be **£75 billion**.

This is an **increase** of **194%** from 2015.

Findings and recommendations



In **2024**, the Stroke Association **asked stroke survivors and professionals** how to **improve stroke prevention, treatment and care**.

We held **five discussion groups** and shared a **survey** and overall we heard from more than **350** people.



The **Government** has committed to **reducing deaths** from **stroke and heart disease** by **25%** by **2035**.

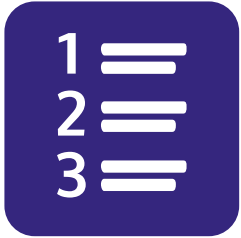
Stroke survivors, healthcare professionals, researchers and community leaders want **stroke care** to be a **top focus** in the **10-year Health Plan**.



This means:

- Giving **the best stroke care**.
- Creating a **plan** to meet the **Government's goal** to reduce stroke deaths by 25%. This goal should also be **expanded** to include a **25% reduction in disability**.
- **Setting up** a **special team** in the Department of Health and Social Care to **lead on stroke care**.
- Continued **funding** for **Integrated Stroke Delivery Networks** (ISDNs) which organise stroke services in England's regions to improve services and staff.

Recommendations



The **recommendations** from the **stroke community** are based on the Government's three big changes:

- **Change 1:** Do more to **stop illnesses** before they happen.
- **Change 2:** **Use more technology** in health and care.
- **Change 3:** **Move** more **care** from **hospitals** to **communities**.



Change 1: Do more to **stop** illnesses before they happen

Recommendation:

The Department of Health and Social Care should **publish** a **funded plan** to **stop strokes happening**.

A **clear plan** would:

- **Improve** how to **identify** and **treat** health issues that increase the chance of stroke.
- **Increase checks** and **treatment** for high **blood pressure**.
- **Improve care** for people with a heart condition **called Atrial fibrillation**. Atrial fibrillation is a condition where a person's **heartbeat** becomes **uneven** and often **too fast**.
- Give **extra help** to **communities** that often miss out on healthcare.

The impact:

Acting early can **stop more strokes** and other health issues from happening.

Preventing each stroke can **save £46,000** in healthcare costs **over five years**.



Change 2: Use more technology in health and care

Recommendation 1:

The Government must **support 24/7 access** to **stroke treatments** like thrombectomy and thrombolysis.

This can be done by:

- Making sure all hospitals have video technology to help them diagnose and treat strokes faster.
- Making sure all stroke patients have **access** to **stroke specialist units** and scans in line with national recommendations.

The impact:

Reduces unnecessary hospital visits and improves access to thrombolysis and thrombectomy.

Recommendation 2:

Provide **online rehabilitation services** to more people.

The Impact:

Programmes that provide **online rehabilitation** have shown **great results** for stroke survivors.

Many **community rehabilitation teams** do not have enough staff. These programmes are important in **helping** to **reach more survivors** and **support** their **recovery**.



Change 3: Move more care from hospitals to communities

Recommendation:

The Government must **help people recover** after their **stroke**.

This can be done by:

- Giving everyone the opportunity to **recover at home** with **early supported discharge (ESD)**.
- ESD is a programme to help people leave the hospital sooner and get support to recover safely at home.
- All stroke survivors are offered a **six-month review** and given access to a **key worker** – this is a professional who helps the person organise services and support.

The impact:

About **two-thirds** of people who have had a stroke **leave** the **hospital** with a **disability**.

Good **rehabilitation** helps people **recover** and improves their health and happiness.

It **reduces pressure** on **social care services** and helps stroke survivors go back to work.

What is needed to improve stroke care

These recommendations depend on making **improvements** in **different parts** of the **stroke care system**.



Teamwork and leadership

- NHS local and regional organisations that organise stroke services need to **work together** to provide the best stroke care.
- Strong **Government leadership** can ensure stroke services have the **money** and help they need to **support** stroke survivors.



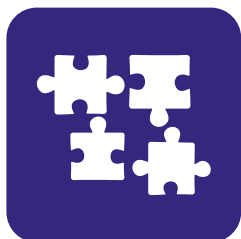
Workforce and skills

- The **stroke workforce** needs to **increase** and be supported to help more people get the treatment and care they need.



Technology and data

- Using **more tools** like video assessments and computers to support scans across the country can **help diagnose** and **treat** people **faster**.
- **Stroke's National Audit data** is an **important tool** for collecting stroke information and must continue to be **funded**.



Connecting stroke care services

- Bringing stroke care services together helps ensure people get the **right care** at every stage of their **treatment** and **recovery**.



Funding stroke care

- Putting **more money** into **stroke treatments** like 24/7 thrombectomy services will help people recover better and save the country money.



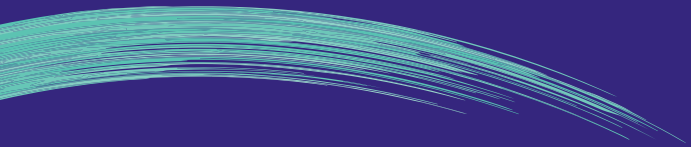
Information for patients

- Information that is **easy** to **understand** helps support stroke survivors and their carers during recovery.
- **Community staff** and **volunteers** can help people stay involved and **reduce** the **pressure** on urgent **care services**.

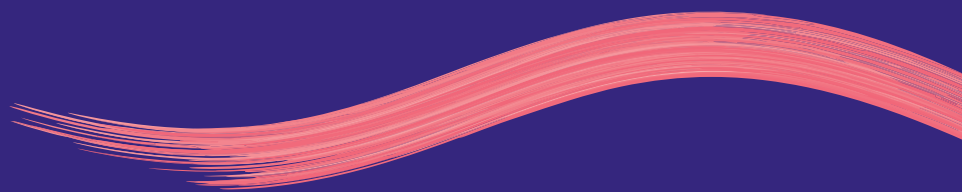


Charity sector

- **Community** and **volunteer organisations need support** to keep providing stroke care.
- The Government should **give community programmes more support** to reach communities that need more help.



Remember, you are not alone.
We are here to support you
throughout your recovery,
whenever you need us.



Contact us

Stroke Support Helpline: **0303 3033 100**

Textphone: **18001 0303 3033 100**

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

Website: **stroke.org.uk**



Finding **strength** through **support**