

Winter 2024

Stroke News

For everyone affected by stroke

**'Life as we knew it
completely changed.'**

Ruth, mother of young
stroke survivor Naomi,
discusses the life-changing
impact of a stroke.

This issue:

- Visit our virtual garden.
- Leaving hospital after a stroke.
- Support with winter energy bills.

Stroke
Association

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

Introducing the **NEW**

Easy-To-Use Samsung Smartphone.

“ Finally, a smartphone that makes staying in touch easy. – Sandra 75, N Yorks ”

The **Samsung Galaxy A05s Easology Smartphone** is designed for ease of use, ideal for both beginners and experienced users. Stay connected with family and friends, browse the web, watch YouTube, check emails, and enjoy your favourite apps.

The home screen highlights your most-needed apps, with information clearly laid out and labelled. A dedicated 'home button' quickly brings you back to the main screen. Large, readable text, bright icons, and enlarged touch areas make navigation a breeze. This Samsung smartphone is fast and powerful, with an all-day battery, ample storage, sharp LCD display, balanced audio, and sleek design, it's both user-friendly and high-performing.



Apps and functions are displayed in an easy scrollable list



Clear layouts for ease-of-use

Available Colours

 Silver  Black

Specifications:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ 6.7" LCD Touch Screen | ■ Front & Rear Camera | ■ Android 14 |
| ■ All-Day Battery | ■ 2 Year Samsung Warranty | ■ Finger Print Unlock |
| ■ 4G (All Networks) | ■ WiFi & Bluetooth | ■ 64GB Storage |

Introductory Offer, ONLY £199.00 includes a free case and free delivery.

 Free SIM Card (or use your own)  Tutorial Videos  Friendly Support Available



Order by Phone
0118 4181217 (local rate)



Order Online at
www.easology.net/eshop

SAMSUNG Galaxy A05s |  easology

Contents



Features

- 8 'Life as we knew it completely changed.'**
Ruth, mother of young stroke survivor Naomi, reflects on the life-changing impact of a stroke.
- 16 Strength in Bloom.** Read about our new virtual garden.
- 32 Addressing cognitive challenges in physiotherapy.**
Stroke researcher Faye Tabone discusses her work.

Editor **Agnessa Kasumyan**
Published by **Stroke Association**,
1 Sterling Business Park, Salthouse Road,
Brackmills, Northampton, NN4 7EX
Advertising **Square7 Media**
Contact **Ethan Hall**
ethan@square7media.co.uk
0203 8322 879
Volume 42.3 Winter 2024
© Stroke Association 2024

Guidance

- 14** Leaving hospital after a stroke.
- 42** Support with winter energy bills.

Contact us on **0300 3300 740**, email supporter.relations@stroke.org.uk or visit stroke.org.uk/strokenews to:

- Subscribe to three editions of Stroke News per year for free (online, in print or audio).
- Change your preferences to online to help save the charity money.
- Unsubscribe.



Editor's letter

Stroke changes lives, but with the right support, survivors and their loved ones can find their way back to life.

In this issue, we meet Naomi, who had a stroke at just eight years old. Her mother, Ruth, discusses the life-changing impact stroke had on their family, and how the Stroke Association has supported them during Naomi's recovery.

This October, we launched a new TV advert to help us raise awareness of stroke and the work of the Stroke Association for stroke survivors like Naomi, as well as their families. Find out more about our advert and how you can join us in raising awareness on page 13.

We also hear from Anne, who tells us how exploring new



activities after her stroke helps her stay active and feel independent (page 38).

Plus, our Stroke Support Helpline Team answer questions about leaving hospital after a stroke (page 14). We also share information about getting financial help with energy bills this winter (page 42).

I hope you enjoy this issue. Please keep sharing your stroke stories with us.

Agnessa Kasumyan, Editor

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this magazine is accurate, but we cannot guarantee accuracy and the information provided does not constitute legal or other professional advice. Opinions shared in this magazine are not always to be taken as the opinions of the Stroke Association. Advertisements, products or services listed are not necessarily recommended by the Stroke Association. Stroke News is printed on paper from sustainable sources. Stroke Association is registered as a charity in England and Wales (No 211015) and in Scotland (SC037789). Also registered in Northern Ireland (XT33805), Isle of Man (No 945) and Jersey (NPO 221).

Over to you

Thank you for sending us Stroke News. My aunt Audrey and I found it inspirational, educational and comforting to know we weren't alone in our setbacks and triumphs.

A remarkable, generous and wise woman who loved to travel, Audrey passed away in February 2024. She worked for Sir George Pinker at the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and was awarded a medal for her services.

She had a stroke in August 2014 and came to live with me and my husband. I did my best to care for

her. She later developed vascular dementia because of the stroke. Although she lived with me for more than 10 years, we weren't aware of the benefits available to us until late in Audrey's illness. For instance, I didn't know I was entitled to Carer's Allowance, and it was only in the last six months of Audrey's life that we learned we were entitled to a 25% council tax discount due to her dementia. I hope sharing our experiences helps others going through a similar situation and raises awareness that support may be available to them.

Bonni Montague

Stroke Support Helpline: **0303 3033 100**

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

Join our Online Community: **onlinecommunity.stroke.org.uk**

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

Do you have something to share?



Email **strokenews@stroke.org.uk** or write to us at Stroke News, Stroke Association, 1 Sterling Business Park, Salthouse Road, Brackmills, Northampton, NN4 7EX

Looking to become more independent and confident by reducing falls and trips and making walking less of an effort while living with the effects of a stroke?

88% of FES users report a reduction in the incidence of falls after using FES.*

*OML Patient Survey 2023



Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) restores and improves movement to assist with walking, grasping, shoulder or bowel function leading to improvements in daily living activities, quality of life and reduced pain.

FES is a treatment which involves applying small electrical pulses to the nerve, activating the muscle which has become weakened due to a neurological condition.

Odstock Medical Ltd (OML) is the leading provider of FES treatment and equipment to the NHS.

FES is a recommended treatment in the National Guidelines for Stroke by the Royal College of Physicians

What our FES users say...

“ It (FES) enables me to walk. Without it, I suffer from the textbook dropped foot. It improves my balance immensely and I can walk safely both upstairs and across uneven ground. ”

Email: enquiries@odstockmedical.com

Call: 01722 439 540

Website: www.odstockmedical.com

Videos:  [Odstock Medical Ltd](#)

Follow us:  @OdstockMedicalLimited  @OdstockMedical

11-005-0035 v3



Scan here

A photograph of Juliet Bouverie OBE, a woman with short grey hair, wearing a dark red velvet jacket over a black top. She is holding a pair of glasses and smiling slightly. The background shows a window with a view of a garden with purple flowers.

From our Chief Executive

Stroke is life-changing, yet it's not the priority it needs to be.

Too many people are unaware of the significant impact stroke can have on survivors and their loved ones, and how crucial support can be for their recovery. Currently, we only reach 1 in 3 stroke survivors, but we're determined to reach and support every survivor within the first year of their stroke.

In October, we launched a new campaign to raise awareness of stroke and the Stroke Association. We worked closely with people affected by stroke to help us understand the best way to share their lived experiences, and they emphasised how important it is to show the reality of stroke. Their stories inspired

our new hard-hitting TV advert, which reflects the struggles that many stroke survivors and their loved ones face.

We know how vital support is for recovery, and we're here to help. In this issue, stroke survivors share how our stroke support services helped them during some of their most challenging times.

The more eyes on our campaign, the easier it will be for us to share the importance of stroke support and the charity's role in helping people make their best possible recovery. Find out more about our TV advert and how you can join us in spreading the word on page 13.

Juliet Bouverie OBE

'Life as we knew it completely changed.'

Like many children her age, Naomi Graham was a lively and active eight-year-old who loved sports. But on the evening of 17 February 2023, her life changed in an instant when she collapsed at a youth club in Kilkeel, County Down.

'My husband Gareth and I took her straight to the local hospital,' says Ruth, Naomi's mother. 'When we arrived, you could see the right side of her face wasn't working, she was clenching her arm and she couldn't move.'

Ruth suspected that Naomi had a stroke, but Gareth was sceptical due to her age. Naomi was transferred to the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC), where doctors confirmed she had a stroke.

'As well as losing all the power down her right-hand side and

function on one side of her face, Naomi also couldn't eat, speak or walk,' says Ruth.

'It was a complete shock. I'd never heard of childhood stroke. Gareth's mum had a stroke, and my maternal grandmother had several, so stroke wasn't new to us, but childhood stroke was. We didn't know what lay ahead of us. When we first got to RBHSC, we thought we'd just be there overnight. Little did we know that we'd be there for seven weeks.'

Naomi's stroke had a profound impact on the entire family.



Naomi and her family

Her two brothers, aged 14 and 12 at the time of her stroke, had to stay with relatives while Ruth and Gareth remained by Naomi's side in hospital.

'Belfast is quite far from where we live. We felt so guilty being away from our sons and missed them so much, but we needed to be with Naomi,' says Ruth.

'Gareth and I were with her constantly. It was a scary time, and we just felt so helpless. There was nothing we could do to help.

'When Naomi was discharged, there was still so much that we didn't know. We had so many questions, but we didn't know who to turn to.'

A chance encounter with the Stroke Association at the Balmoral Show changed that.

'We met the local team, and it was really such a lifeline for us,' says Ruth. 'They put us in touch with Liz, a local Stroke Support Coordinator. She phoned me several times and told me about the different stroke support services that the charity offers.'

'Liz was so calm and reassuring. She listened and cared, and she really had that understanding and that desire to help.'

Liz connected Ruth with the Stroke Association's Parent-to-Parent Volunteer Calls service, which allows parents to speak to trained volunteers who have lived experience in coping with the impact of a child's stroke.

'Life as we knew it completely changed. Even now, more than a year and a half later, we're still getting used to our new normal,' says Ruth. 'Speaking to someone who understood helped so much. This was so important because the stroke didn't just affect Naomi.'





Naomi hopes to play the piano again

'It was just so helpful to have somebody on the phone who could help us navigate Naomi's stroke recovery journey.'

'It was hard on our whole family. It was really important to be in touch with people who understood the impact of stroke. This helped us understand it better, too.

'I had so many questions – what was Naomi's return to school going to look like? How is it going to impact her? How are we going to manage this? It was just so helpful to have somebody on the phone who could help us navigate Naomi's stroke recovery journey.'

Since leaving hospital, Naomi has had regular physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy, making significant progress in her recovery. She has not only returned to school but can walk again and is back at gymnastics and football.

'There's never been a point where she said, 'Oh, I've had a stroke. I can't do that.' She pushes herself and gives it her all.'

'She'll limp if she's tired, but she pushes on,' says Ruth. 'Her arm still has weakness, but she can move it again. She still struggles with her right hand, which just curls. It clasps in and closes, and she'll have to almost force it open. We're trying different exercises to see what will help.

'She can't write with her right hand anymore, but she's learned how to write with her left one. Her next big goal is to play the piano again. She'll play, her hand will curl, and she'll just fix it and try again.

'There's never been a point where she said, 'Oh, I've had

a stroke. I can't do that.' She pushes herself and gives it her all. She always amazes me, and we're so proud of her.

'There have been so many painful moments, with plenty of tears, but Naomi just sees the positives and takes everything one day at a time. She is still Naomi, and her beautiful personality just shines through.'

Despite the challenges she's faced, Naomi is determined to keep moving forward.

Naomi says: 'Don't look back, and don't give up.'



If you've been affected by childhood stroke, our Childhood Stroke Support Team is here to help. Check out stroke.org.uk/stroke-in-childhood to find out more about our services.

You can also help us be there for stroke survivors and their loved ones by donating what you can at stroke.org.uk/families

A photograph of a woman and a young girl standing outdoors. The woman is on the right, wearing a maroon long-sleeved top, and the girl is on the left, wearing a purple zip-up jacket. They are both smiling at the camera. In the background, there is a green field, a wooden fence, and a range of mountains under a cloudy sky.

Raising awareness of the life-changing impact of a stroke

Every day in the UK, another 240 people experience the life-changing impact of a stroke. Stories like Naomi's are why we're so committed to raising awareness.

Many people don't realise how stroke can change lives or how vital support can be for stroke survivors. They're also unaware of the support available to them and their loved ones through the Stroke Association. This means that many miss out on crucial services that can support their recovery.

That's why, in October, we launched an important new national campaign to raise awareness of stroke and the Stroke Association. This includes our new TV advert, inspired by stories from real

stroke survivors. Their input helped us create an advert that reflects their lived experiences.

The advert depicts the immediate period after a stroke, with actors portraying survivors of different ages to show that stroke can affect anyone. Visit **stroke.org.uk/** **TVcampaign** to watch the advert and share it with your family, friends or on social media. Every like, comment and share helps us reach more people with our support.

Our advert may be distressing for some people affected by stroke. If you need support, please get in touch with our Stroke Support Helpline by emailing **helpline@stroke.org.uk** or calling **0303 3033 100**.

Leaving hospital after a stroke

Returning home after a stroke is a big step in your recovery, but it can also feel overwhelming for you and your loved ones. You may not know what to expect and worry about whether you'll continue to receive support at home.

Hannah from our Stroke Support Helpline Team answers some commonly asked questions.

What happens when I'm discharged from hospital?

Your hospital stroke team will work with you to determine what support you'll need at home. They'll put together a discharge plan, which covers all the arrangements for your continued care and rehabilitation needs at home.

If you're likely to have longer-term care needs, a social care professional may complete a care assessment. Based on the results, they may recommend things like adaptations to your home or support from a carer.

A carer can be unpaid, such as a friend or a member of your family, or a paid professional.

Will my treatment continue once I'm home?

When you're ready to return home, your community stroke team will help you with your continued care and rehabilitation needs. Like your hospital stroke team, your community team will consist of different healthcare professionals. They can include:

- Community stroke nurses.
- Physiotherapists.
- Speech and language therapists.
- Occupational therapists.
- Dietitians.



Is support available to my carer?

It's important to make sure that your carer also has access to the right support. Any friends or family members providing unpaid support can have a carer's assessment to see if help is available.

Although this assessment should take place before you leave hospital, it can happen afterwards. We encourage carers to be honest about their needs to make sure they access all the support they're entitled to.



Visit **stroke.org.uk/discharge**, call our Stroke Support Helpline on **0303 3033 100** or email **helpline@stroke.org.uk** for more support. You can now also access our Stroke Support Helpline with a BSL interpreter. Visit **stroke.org.uk/BSL** for more information.

Strength in Bloom

In June, the Stroke Association launched our first ever virtual garden, 'Strength in Bloom'. This project was inspired by our 'Garden for Recovery', which was first showcased at the RHS Chelsea Flower show in May and now has a permanent home at Chapel Allerton Hospital in Leeds.

'Strength in Bloom' is a calming online space where you can listen to the sounds of nature, such as birds singing and water gently flowing, while you explore the virtual landscape.

Once inside the garden, you can make a tribute with a symbolic flower, bench or plaque to honour those affected by stroke.

Emily Higgins dedicated a flower to her great-grandmother, Hilda McDonald, who passed away following her stroke in 2018.

'For me, stroke took one of the most important people in my life from me,' says Emily.



'My Nana was the matriarch of our family. She was always there when you needed her.

'I bought a flower in the garden so that everyone in my family has a place to visit her. My family lives all over Europe, so they can't easily visit her grave whenever they want to.

'But they all have access to a computer, so they can access the virtual garden to feel close to her.

'Virtual initiatives like 'Strength in Bloom' really level the playing field in terms of accessibility. The garden is something I can share with my family and friends, no matter where they are or their level of physical ability.'

As visitors tour the garden, they can read tributes to those affected by stroke.

'The garden brings together a community of stories, so I know I'm not alone in my loss. It's also nice to know that others will get a chance to 'meet' my Nana by reading about her in the garden. It gives her a place to still bloom,' says Emily.



Our virtual garden



Emily hopes the garden will help raise awareness of stroke.

my contribution also supports the Stroke Association.'

'The garden features tributes not only to people who've lost their lives to stroke, like my Nana, but also to those who are thriving after their stroke,' she says. 'It's a powerful reminder that hope exists after stroke, and with ongoing research and support, we can significantly improve stroke outcomes. When I purchased a flower for my Nana, it felt rewarding knowing that

A big thank you to Dobbies Garden Centres for sponsoring our virtual garden. Dobbies Garden Centres champions garden living all-year-round and offers a calendar of events and experiences that bring people and communities together.



You can visit our virtual garden or make a tribute at stroke.org.uk/virtual-garden



Communicate with confidence after a stroke

Order your free Communication Support Pack.

It includes information and tools to **help you, your family, and friends** to learn about **communication difficulties** after a stroke.



Scan the QR code or visit
stroke.org.uk/aphasia

Campaigning in Northern Ireland and Scotland

Saving Brains in Northern Ireland

On 16 September 2024, stroke survivors and campaigners in Northern Ireland delivered a petition from the Stroke Association to Health Minister Mike Nesbitt MLA, calling on him to make thrombectomies available 24/7.

6.4%

of stroke patients received a thrombectomy in Northern Ireland in 2023-24.

A thrombectomy is the surgical removal of a blood clot from the brain. It can not only save lives, but it can also significantly reduce the chance of disabilities like paralysis, blindness and aphasia. Although Northern

Ireland has the highest thrombectomy rate in the UK, with 6.4% of patients receiving the procedure in 2023-24, it's not available after 6:00pm.

'It's an extremely cost-effective procedure that can change lives and save on healthcare costs,' says Alasdair O'Hara, Associate Director for the Stroke Association in Northern Ireland. 'So many people signed the petition because they know that thrombectomy saves brains, saves money, and most importantly, saves lives.'

The petition, part of our Saving Brains campaign in Northern Ireland, urges the Health Minister to deliver on the Department of Health's Stroke Action Plan, which committed to making round-the-clock thrombectomy available by the end of 2024.



Clodagh Dunlop MBE, one of the stroke survivors who delivered the petition, shares that receiving a thrombectomy saved her life. In April 2015, a brain stem stroke initially left Clodagh with locked-in syndrome.

‘The thrombectomy team came in out of hours on a holiday to perform the procedure,’ she says. ‘This gave me my life back.’

Clodagh’s experience is a powerful reminder of why access to life-saving procedures

like thrombectomy is so important for stroke survivors.

Pam Tilson, Public Affairs and Campaigns Officer for Northern Ireland, says: ‘We’re very thankful to everyone who rallied behind our petition. We’ll continue to advocate for 24/7 access to thrombectomy. Everyone eligible for a thrombectomy should have access to one – no matter where or when they have a stroke. Delivering the petition was a monumental step. It gives me hope for the future of thrombectomy services in Northern Ireland.’



Visit stroke.org.uk/NIcampaign to learn more about our Saving Brains campaign to expand thrombectomy services.

Improving stroke care in Scotland

In the UK, Scotland has the highest rate of stroke and the largest proportion of people living with disabilities due to stroke. In response, the Scottish Government has taken steps to improve stroke care.

In 2023, the Scottish Government introduced its Stroke Improvement Plan, detailing the commitments required from health boards to improve stroke services. These commitments include equal and timely access to diagnosis and crucial treatments like thrombectomy; six-month progress reviews; and psychological support.

Stroke survivor Chris White, 58, experienced first-hand the benefits of exemplary stroke care.

'I went to A&E at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, and I was assessed by the rapid response team within five minutes,' says Chris. 'I had a brain scan, which confirmed

I had a stroke, and the team explained that I would be injected with a drug to disperse the clot. By that evening, I was in a high dependency stroke unit, where I stayed for three days.'

During his 10-day stay in hospital, Chris received tailored rehabilitation support, including speech therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

'The therapists asked me about my goals early on, and I told them that I wanted to return to work,' he says. 'They developed a programme that put me on a path to recovery. I can't stress enough how important this was for me. It jolted me into action and gave me hope. The care I received was quick and effective, which really reduced my stress.'

Unfortunately, not every stroke survivor gets such swift treatment and stroke support like Chris.

On 11 October 2024, the Stroke Association launched 'Scotland's Stroke Improvement Plan: one year on', a campaign



'The care I received was quick and effective, which really reduced my stress.'

that urges the Scottish Government to follow through on its commitments to improve stroke care. The goal is to ensure that all stroke survivors can receive early treatment and stroke support like Chris.

John Watson, Associate Director for the Stroke Association in Scotland, says: 'Health boards continue to fall short of the standards for stroke care that have long been in place to improve patient outcomes.'

'Our autumn campaign calls for improvements outlined in the Stroke Improvement Plan to be accelerated, not only to save lives but to save money, too.'

'The framework for improvement is there. But we need the right leadership to inject urgency among decision-makers. We hope our campaign encourages people to contact their local Member of the Scottish Parliament, and ask them to make stroke a higher priority.'



Visit stroke.org.uk/campaigns-Scotland to learn more about our campaign and read our report. You can also sign up to our Campaigns Network at stroke.org.uk/campaigning

Support can make all the difference

On 20 June 2024, retired librarian Fran Wortley, 68, was attending her textile art club in Bedford when she began experiencing stroke symptoms.

'I felt a strange pins-and-needles sensation in my right arm, but I dismissed it as a cramp,' says Fran.

Later that evening, Fran and her husband Roger went to Bedford Hospital, where doctors told her that she had a stroke.

'In that moment, I looked at Roger and felt like our whole world changed in an instant,' she says. 'I was so scared, but at the same time, I was determined to stay calm and strong for Roger. I couldn't understand what this meant for me – will I be myself again? Will this happen again? So many questions were spinning in my head, and my anxiety was at an all-time high.'

After leaving hospital, the reality of living with the aftermath of a stroke began to sink in.

'Every day takes effort and feels long. I consider myself incredibly lucky, but I also recognise that I'm living with many hidden disabilities, which are not only hard to come to terms with but also to navigate every day,' says Fran.

Since her stroke, Fran has struggled with finger dexterity, hand strength and arm and shoulder movement, but she has experienced improvement through targeted exercises.

'Rosemary, my NHS Neuro Assistant practitioner, visited me



regularly. I'm so thankful, because the exercises made such a huge difference to my physical recovery,' she says.

Fran also found support through the Stroke Association's Stroke Support Helpline and the local Stroke Recovery Service in Bedfordshire.

'When I left hospital, I had so many questions. I needed someone to talk to, someone who understood – and that's when the Stroke Association stepped in. It's amazing how one person saying the right thing can make you feel so much better.

'I initially spoke to someone on the Stroke Association's Helpline. They made me feel so calm and reassured. I left the call feeling a boost of support, guidance and love. It was the huge lift I needed.

'The factsheets and community forum on the Stroke Association website were also great tools. I understood so much more about what I'd been through. I felt lucky to have all that at my fingertips.'

Fran also received regular visits from Kat, her local Stroke Support Coordinator.

'The way she sat with me and Roger and slowly talked us through not only what happened, but how I can improve, was incredibly helpful,' says Fran.

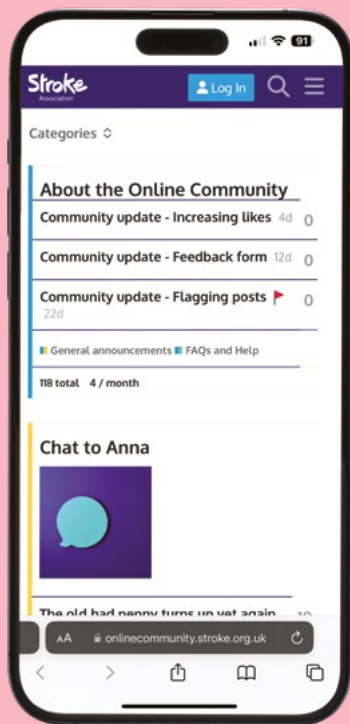
'Having a stroke can feel frightening, painful and lonely. With support from the Stroke Association, I began to feel stronger and more determined. Before my stroke, I was often the first to help others. Now I'm learning how to ask for help, how to slow down and how to talk to others about what happened.

'My biggest advice to those in a similar position is to get as much support as possible. The charity's website, Helpline and local teams are all ways you can connect with someone who understands.'

Fran is optimistic about her recovery journey.

'I have a list of recovery goals I want to achieve, like working on my confidence and strength, driving again, offering a loving home to another dog in need and getting back into sewing,' she says. 'I'm thrilled that I've

been able to hold a needle again recently!'



Visit **onlinecommunity.stroke.org.uk** to access 24/7 information, advice and support from our Online Community.

Our Stroke Support Helpline is also here for anyone affected by stroke. Email us at **helpline@stroke.org.uk** or call **0303 3033 100**.

Why have a **stairlift** when you can have a **real lift**?

Stairlift? No thanks!

A Stiltz Homelift is a safe, attractive and affordable alternative to a stairlift. It can be installed into almost any home. A Stiltz Homelift has a compact footprint, similar in size to a small armchair.

Your forever home

Save the cost and upheaval of moving or the disruption of adapting your home for downstairs living. A Stiltz Homelift helps you live safely and independently in the home you love.



Fit in any home



Quick and easy install



Low energy use



Safety as standard



Quiet as a whisper



We handle everything



Call for a FREE brochure or no obligation home survey



0808 258 3178



stiltz.co.uk

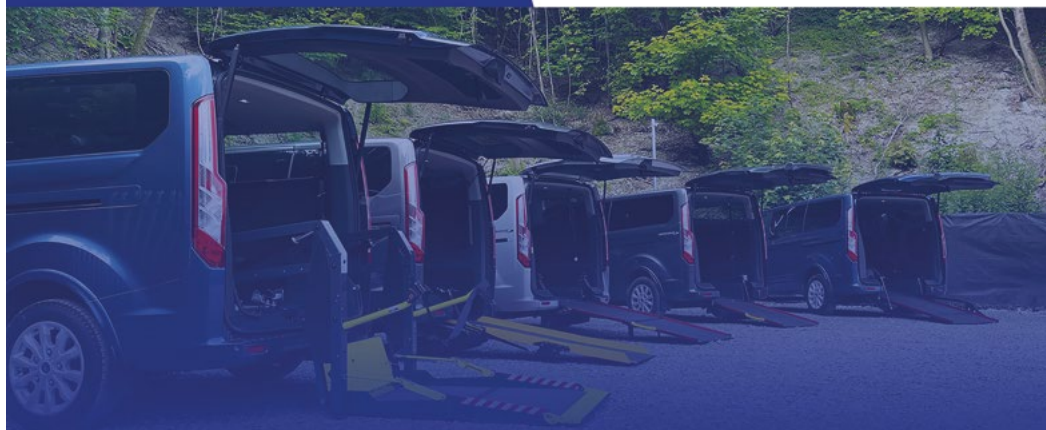
Stiltz
Homelifts



Motability



WavMob



Lease a Nearly New WAV on Motability.

Contact **WavMob** today.

02392 245570

sales@wavmob.co.uk

www.wavmob.co.uk

Recovery takes time

Kevin Harrison, 44, was working as a contracts manager in the construction industry when he had a stroke in September 2022.

‘I went to work and felt fine all day,’ says Kevin. ‘Shortly after arriving home, I suddenly felt a sharp, burning sensation in the corner of my right eye and pain in the back of my head. It was so intense and came on so suddenly that I turned to see if someone had hit me.’

Kevin was taken to hospital by ambulance. Although an initial CT scan came back clear, an MRI revealed he had a stroke.

‘When the doctors told me, I was on my own because my wife Emma went to pick up the kids from school,’ he says. ‘The news was upsetting, especially when I called my wife and parents to tell them.’

Kevin was treated by physiotherapists for weakness

on his left side, which improved, and he was discharged after three days. Although he had no outward signs of a stroke, he struggled with fatigue and headaches that made him feel dizzy and nauseous. This impacted his ability to return to work.

‘I have always worked,’ says Kevin. ‘In the 14 years I had been with my employer, I’d never taken a day off sick.’

Although Kevin’s fatigue improved by Christmas, his other symptoms, including a persistent headache, remained. He hoped to return to work, setting new goals for himself every six weeks. When his symptoms didn’t improve, he had to keep pushing back his return to work.

'I felt guilty, like I was letting people down,' he says.

In January 2023, Kevin joined the local Stroke Association stroke support group in Warrington.

'At first, I was reluctant to go because I didn't think there would be anybody my age. I went along to see what it was like and couldn't believe how many people in

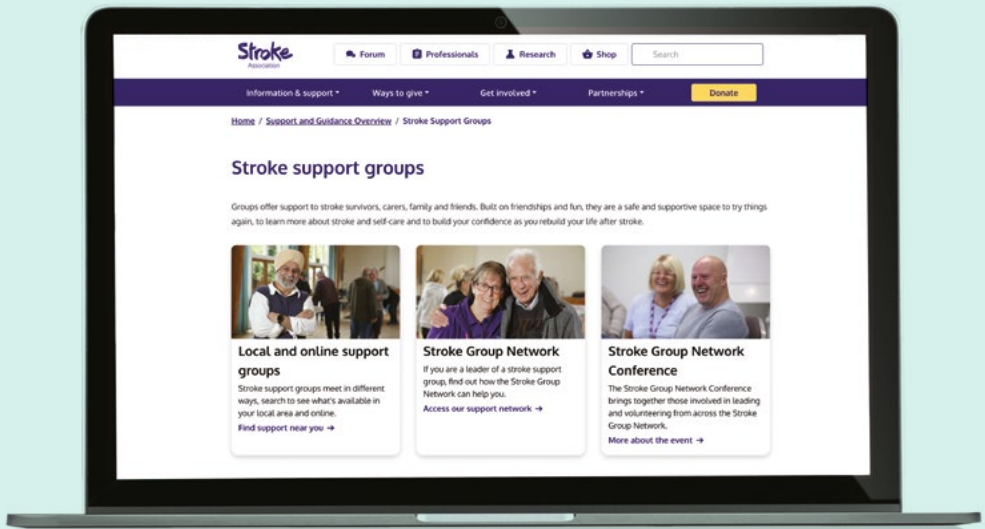
their forties and fifties were there,' he says.

'I was a little bit nervous at first, but the group runs really well.

'I highly recommend to anyone who's had a stroke to join a group.'



Kevin (left) with his family



Connecting with people who've had a stroke can help support your recovery. Visit stroke.org.uk/groups to see what's available in your local area and online.

'There was no pressure to talk in front of everyone and share my story. It was more about sitting with a cup of tea and getting to know people. Over time, I spoke to people about my experience and how I was feeling, which really helped.'

'When I expressed guilt about not working, they encouraged me to be kind to myself and accept my 'new normal.' The group helped me understand that recovery

takes time and that I was putting too much pressure on myself to recover.'

The group has now become an integral part of Kevin's life.

'I highly recommend to anyone who's had a stroke to join a group,' says Kevin. 'I've found great support, and I've formed genuine friendships with people I wouldn't have met otherwise. It's a part of my life now, and I wouldn't change it.'



'Gold Standard' Innovation of Purée Meals

This Autumn, people living with swallowing difficulties have the opportunity to experience excellence in both flavour and texture with the launch of Wiltshire Farm Foods' latest Level 4 Purée meals.

Customers can look forward to five brand new dishes, including Purée Fish Pie, Purée Bean Chilli and Purée Chicken Korma along with the delicious additions of new sides such as Purée Sweetcorn and Purée Green Beans.

The range now also features many stand-out sauces such as apple, mint, butter and mushroom, to accompany the main dish, elevating flavour and improving texture which complies with the latest IDDSI guidelines.

The award-winning ready meal provider believes passionately in dining with dignity and that first and foremost we eat with our eyes. Presentation of its meals has always been of

paramount importance, with the Purée Cottage Pie now featuring fork marks on top to give it that home-cooked appearance.

Fife-based customer, Sandra Mearns, lives with swallowing difficulties – also known as dysphagia, a condition which can impact half of stroke survivors – and welcomes the new range:

"I've been living with achalasia and really struggle to get my food down as a result. Generally speaking, I prefer meals with sauces as the food passes much more easily into my stomach and I'm in less discomfort as a result.

"A lot of these new meals from Wiltshire Farm Foods have a selection of sauces which I'm delighted about. I don't use my oven so the ease of popping them straight into the microwave is really convenient for me. I'm especially looking forward to trying the Purée Salmon in Butter Sauce."

Addressing **cognitive challenges** in physiotherapy

Many stroke survivors experience cognitive challenges such as memory issues, difficulty concentrating and problems with planning or multitasking. These symptoms can significantly impact physiotherapy outcomes, but physiotherapists often find them challenging to detect.



When she was just 11 years old, stroke researcher Faye Tabone saw a relative experience similar obstacles after a stroke.

‘This motivated me to pursue a career in stroke research, particularly in the fields of neuropsychology and neuroscience. I wanted to understand the cognitive impacts of stroke.’

‘Everyday tasks like making a cup of tea became difficult for my relative, which really frustrated them,’ says Faye. ‘Nobody in my family understood what was going on, cognitively speaking. Like most families, we didn’t know that stroke can affect cognitive function.’

Now a Clinical Neuroscience PhD student at the University of Oxford, Faye is investigating how to better integrate cognitive rehabilitation into physiotherapy.

Funded by the Stroke Association, her research



aims to develop a toolkit that physiotherapists can use to identify and address cognitive challenges.

'If a stroke survivor struggles with cognitive functions, such as attention or planning, they may find it hard to complete multi-step tasks or follow instructions,' says Faye. 'Before a stroke, if someone told you to get up, raise your hand and then sit back down, you may have done it easily. But after a stroke, this can suddenly become very difficult to do.'

'Unfortunately, there isn't much awareness about cognitive functioning and the role it plays in completing routine tasks. This can leave some stroke survivors vulnerable during treatment because they can't identify what exactly they're struggling with and why. How can they communicate their difficulties to a therapist if they don't know what those difficulties are?

'In physiotherapy, this can be discouraging for stroke survivors and reduce their engagement and participation. They may feel less motivated to continue,





which can prevent them from improving their motor skills.

‘Ideally, a neuropsychologist would be present during rehab sessions to help physiotherapists detect cognitive problems that can impact physical recovery. But this isn’t always possible, so it often falls on physiotherapists who may not be equipped or trained to help patients with cognitive challenges. This can impact treatment outcomes.

‘I’ll be working closely with stroke survivors and healthcare professionals to develop a toolkit they can use to identify cognitive challenges more

easily. Physiotherapists should have all the resources they need to feel confident in their ability to treat stroke survivors.

‘I also hope the toolkit will help stroke survivors better understand their cognitive challenges. If they’re more aware of what they’re struggling with, they may feel less discouraged and more empowered during physiotherapy.’



Visit stroke.org.uk/research to learn more about the research we fund.

Supporting stroke research

We're committed to funding research to build our understanding of stroke and to improve treatment, care and quality of life for everyone affected.

If you can, please support others whose lives have been changed by stroke. You can make a donation by visiting **stroke.org.uk/donating**, by calling us on **0300 3300 740** or by completing the form below.

I enclose my total gift of £

Funds raised will go towards vital services and pioneering research to help support people affected by stroke.

I enclose a cheque made payable to Stroke Association OR please debit my: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ CAF Charity Card

Card no: - - -

Expiry date: /

Signature:

Date: / /

SN24DON
STRK0139

Make your gift worth 25% extra with Gift Aid

To enable us to claim the tax already paid on your donation, please tick the relevant box below. This will mean that if you are able to give £20, Gift Aid would make your gift worth £25. *giftaid it*

☐ I am a UK taxpayer and would like to Gift Aid this donation and any donations I have made in the past four years, or I make in the future to the Stroke Association.

I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax each tax year (6 April to 5 April), than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all of my donations, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Date: / /

☐ Sorry, I am not a UK taxpayer, and therefore cannot take part in Gift Aid.

Return your form

Please detach this form and return it to us using the envelope enclosed, or post it to:
**Stroke Association, Bumpers Way, Bumpers Farm,
Chippenham SN14 6NG**



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

Keeping in touch

We would love to send you information about the difference you can make to families affected by stroke through campaigning, volunteering, donating and through your own fundraising. Please tell us how you'd like us to stay in touch by filling in your details below.

How would you like to hear from us?

☐ Email

☐ Text

☐ Phone

SN24DON
STRK0140

Your name:

Please enter your phone number or email:

Address

Postcode

Our Promise

Your privacy is our priority. We promise to keep your details safe and will never sell them. We will also keep in touch by post about how we can continue to support you, and opportunities to support us. If you would like to change the way you hear from us, just call **0300 3300 740** or email **supporter.relations@stroke.org.uk**. How we protect and use your personal data is set out in our privacy policy at **stroke.org.uk/privacy**

Wheelchaircars.co.uk



**FREE NO
OBLIGATION HOME
DEMONSTRATIONS**



**USED VEHICLES
FROM £2995**

Tel: 0161 793 5934

**Full details on our website,
www.wheelchaircars.co.uk**

Staying active after a stroke

For many stroke survivors, staying active and feeling independent are crucial to their recovery.

After her stroke in 2016, Anne Bartle, 63, was determined to be independent. Learning how to drive again and exploring new activities helped her do just that.

'I was a freelance beauty teacher when I had a stroke,' says Anne. 'I had a year's worth of bookings in my diary and thought I'd be back to work in three months. But two years down the line, I came to terms with the fact that I wouldn't be working again. I had a right-sided stroke, and I still can't use my right hand. It's difficult to teach things like manicures with just one hand!

'But I like to keep busy. If I don't have an outlet where I can be independent, I can feel bored, frustrated and lonely. I've got to have something to do.

'Two years after my stroke, I took left-footed driving lessons. I can now drive using my left hand and foot, along with a steering knob so I can steer one-handed. I've been driving on my own since I was 17, and I didn't want to lose the freedom of being able to get out on my own if I needed to.'

'If I don't have an outlet where I can be independent, I can feel bored, frustrated and lonely.'



Photography by G. Watson for Buzz Bingo

Anne plays bingo for the first time

Anne has also found it helpful to try new hobbies.

'I always wanted to garden before my stroke, but I didn't have the time,' she says. 'I really enjoy gardening now because it gets me out of the house and keeps me active. I mainly grow vegetables like green beans, cabbages and courgettes. Even though the slugs ate a lot of them this year, I've still managed to grow enough to last me through the winter!

'I've picked up sketching, too. I wasn't sure if I could sketch with my left hand, but I wanted to prove to myself that I could. I really enjoy drawing animals – especially cats.'

Anne also stays active by running the Parklands Stroke Support Club in Long Eaton. Introduced to the group by the Stroke Association shortly after her stroke, Anne encourages other members to try new activities as well, like wreath-making or learning new games.



Earlier this year, Anne and a few other members of the group played bingo for first time at the Buzz Bingo Derby Club.

‘It was a great experience,’ she says. ‘It was exciting, and you actually feel a buzz when you’re playing.

‘After a stroke, trying new things and staying active isn’t always easy, but it’s very rewarding. Just take things at your own pace. If something isn’t for you, you can always try something else.

‘I’ve had to make adaptations, like using a trolley or my wheelchair to move things around when I’m gardening. But being able to try new things on my own has made such a positive difference

to my recovery. I feel more independent, and I stay busy and engaged, so I don’t ever feel too bored or lonely.’



We’ve partnered with Buzz Bingo, the UK’s largest bingo chain, to help tackle loneliness and social isolation after stroke. We’re working together to ensure Buzz Bingo’s clubs are accessible and supportive places, where anyone impacted by stroke can meet others, find their confidence again and have fun.

Visit buzzbingo.com/clubs to find your local Buzz Bingo club. You must be 18 years or older to participate. Please play responsibly.

GambleAware

medimotion

GET MOVING EVERYDAY...

Stay active with
RECK MOTOMed®

Passive, motor assisted, active movement.
For loosening, strengthening & endurance



muvi
Train arms & legs together



loop
Innovative height adjustment

MOTOMed training can:
Reduce muscle stiffness and
increase range of movement.
Improve circulation, walking ability,
cardiovascular function.
Used extensively in UK hospitals,
therapy centres and private homes.

Interest free
hire/buyer plan
available.
Call now for a **FREE**
demonstration.

**01559
384097**



Interactive gaming



Co-ordination training



Children's



Bed Model



Parkinson's

tel: 01559 384097

sales@medimotion.co.uk www.medimotion.co.uk

RECK
MOTOMed®
www.motomed.com

Support with **winter energy bills**

A stroke can take a financial toll on survivors and their families. You may face challenges due to loss of income, medical expenses, long-term care costs or family members working less hours to support with care.

As temperatures get cooler, concerns about higher energy bills may add extra financial pressure. Fortunately, support is available to help you manage increased costs during winter.

Energy grants

If you're struggling to pay energy bills, contact your supplier as soon as possible. They can discuss options such as giving you more time to pay.

Many energy companies also have schemes for customers struggling to pay their bills. For example, the British Gas Energy Trust offers grants to people living in England, Scotland or Wales to help them clear their gas and electricity debts. You don't have to be a British Gas customer to apply. Visit **britishgasenergytrust.org.uk** to apply online or call **0121 3487 797**.

Other energy companies also have schemes for customers struggling with their expenses. You can also reach out to Citizens Advice for more information about grants from energy suppliers that may help pay off energy debts. Check out **citizensadvice.org.uk** for more information.



Benefits to help with heating costs



Winter Fuel Payment

If you're over the State Pension age and receive certain benefits, you may qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment from the UK Government. Payments range from £200 to £300, depending on your age and who you live with. Qualifying individuals should receive payments directly into their account, either in November or December.

You cannot get a Winter Fuel Payment if you live in Scotland. Instead, you'll receive a Pension Age Winter Heating Payment, a new benefit provided by the Scottish Government.

Please visit [gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment) for the latest information and to check your eligibility.



Cold Weather Payments

If you don't qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment, you may be eligible for Cold Weather Payments instead. The UK Government provides these payments during any seven-day period when temperatures drop to or below zero degrees Celsius. If eligible, no application is necessary. A payment will be made directly into your account.

Like the Winter Fuel Payment, you won't receive a Cold Weather Payment if you live in Scotland.



The Scottish Government will instead automatically pay individuals already on certain benefits.

Check out [gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme](https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme) or call **0800 0309 322** for more information.

Visit [gov.uk/cold-weather-payment](https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment) for more information.



Warm Home Discount Scheme

Through this UK Government scheme, you can get a one-off £150 discount on your electricity bill to help with energy costs over winter. If you qualify, the money is taken directly off your bill. Contact your electricity supplier to see if they are a part of the scheme.

Food banks

With higher energy bills this winter, you may also find yourself struggling to pay for food. But food banks can help. You usually need to be referred to one by a professional, such as your GP, a social worker or a Citizens Advice service. You can also reach out to your local council for information about food banks and other crisis support in your local area.



Visit [stroke.org.uk/financial](https://www.stroke.org.uk/financial) for more information. You can also call our Stroke Support Helpline on **0303 3033 100**.

Regular Exercise at a Low Price



THERA-Trainer tigo

- ✓ Active and passive movement (with or without motor support)
- ✓ Increases mobility
- ✓ Strengthens the muscles
- ✓ Improves levels of stamina and flexibility system
- ✓ Exercising of legs and/or arms is possible
- ✓ Improves metabolism and vitality
- ✓ Exercising is possible from a chair or a wheel chair

Payment plan available to suit all budgets

Get 2023 prices in 2024:

Just mention this advert when you contact us.

Call our friendly team in Milton Keynes on 01908 564100 to arrange a **FREE**, no-obligation demonstration in your home

THERA-Trainer UK Ltd.

T. 01908 564100 | info.uk@thera-trainer.com | www.thera-trainer.co.uk



Simply scan the QR-Code for more information about the THERA-Trainer tigo.

Visit our website for future updates, new products and much more – www.thera-trainer.co.uk

Puzzles



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

Word search

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

COAT
GIFT
ROAST
SOUP
ICE

HOLLY
RUGBY
FIRE
MITTS
SNOW

Across

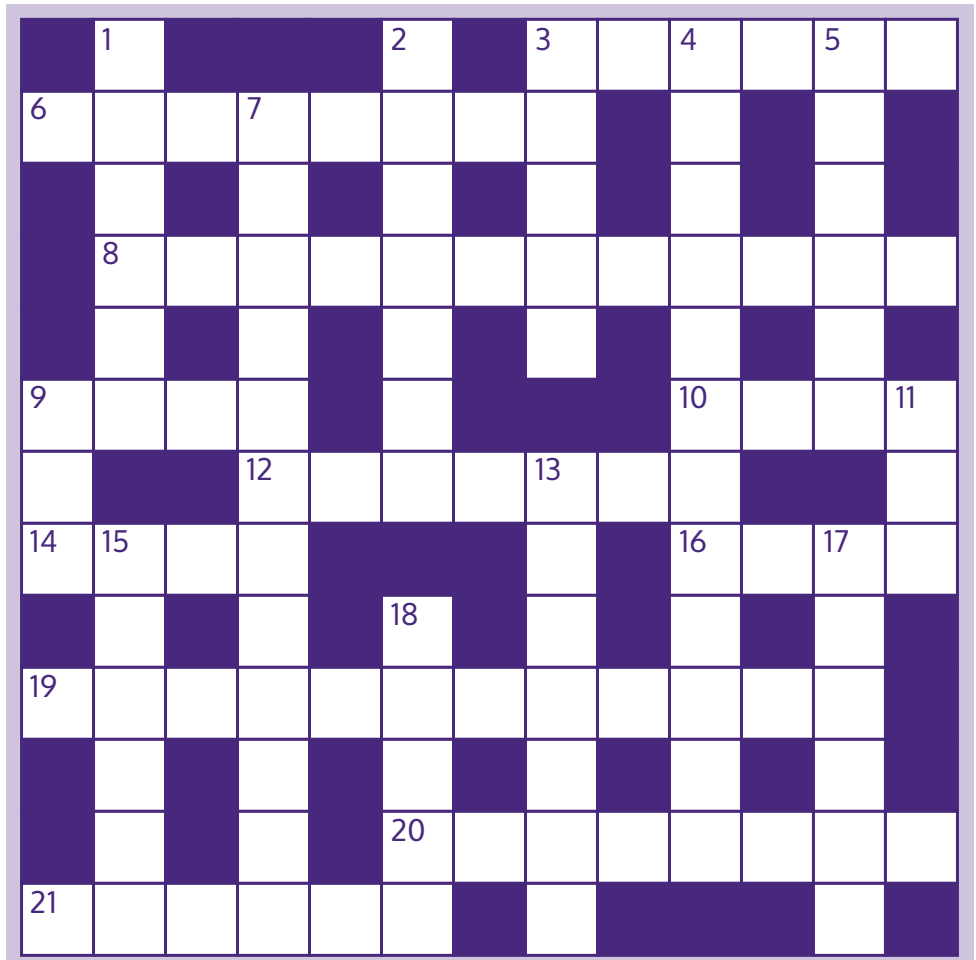
- 1 Yearly (6)
- 6 Energetic (8)
- 8 Academic (12)
- 9 Vibes (4)
- 10 Bludgeon (4)
- 12 State of bliss (7)
- 14 See you in Italy (4)
- 16 Indecent (4)
- 19 Prone to utter abuse (12)
- 20 Colouring substances (8)
- 21 Music of southern Louisiana (6)

Lottery

For your chance to win £1,000 every week, play the Stroke Association Charity Lottery. Find out more at lottery.stroke.org.uk

Down

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----|---------------------|
| 1 | Setting (6) | 9 | Curved line (3) |
| 2 | Colorado city (7) | 11 | Took cover (3) |
| 3 | Pallid (5) | 13 | Put on trial (7) |
| 4 | 1852 metres (8,4) | 15 | Silliness (6) |
| 5 | Every time (6) | 17 | Ring of flowers (6) |
| 7 | Beat by strategy (12) | 18 | Musical pace (5) |



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

Finding strength through support

When a stroke happens, we're here with support for stroke survivors and their families. But we can only continue to provide vital support with your help. A huge thank you to everyone who has gone the extra mile to fundraise, volunteer and campaign with us. Your efforts mean we can reach even more people who need us.



Stephanie Kempsell

Congratulations to Stephanie Kempsell for raising £3,150 by running 10km a day throughout the month of August. Stephanie raised money in honour of her mother Rene, who passed away from a stroke.

Jacky Summerfield

Congratulations to the amazing Jacky Summerfield, who raised more than £550 by completing the Velocity Zip slide challenge.



Find out what events we've got coming up on page 50 or visit stroke.org.uk/donating to donate.

How does your donation help?



£10 supports our Stroke Support Helpline to answer a call from someone who urgently needs support after a life-changing stroke.



£25 could be part of a hardship grant for a stroke survivor who is struggling to pay for basics like food and clothing.



£50 could help us be there for children and families through our Childhood Stroke Support.



2nd Ickenham Brownies

A big thank you to all at the 2nd Ickenham Brownies, who completed their charity badge after raising £1,050 for us. They rallied their family and friends to participate in a charity skipping event, where at least one participant skipped for an entire 90-minute Brownie session.



Volunteer spotlight

Derek Healy has volunteered for the Oxford Aphasia Group for 12 years.

'I was introduced to the group when I took a close friend of mine who had a stroke to the meetups,' he says.

'I began volunteering because I wanted to help the group grow and make sure my friend could benefit as much as possible. This remains one of my main motivations.

'Socialising with others who've had a similar experience with aphasia makes a big difference for stroke survivors. They realise that they're not alone, and seeing others recover their language skills gives them hope for their own recovery.'

Visit stroke.org.uk/yoursupport to find out how you can volunteer.

Join Team Stroke

Get involved and fundraise at home, or join us at exciting events around the UK:



London Winter Walk

25-26 January 2025

Start the new year with a 10k, half marathon or full marathon walking challenge. Beginning and finishing at The Oval Cricket Ground, you can enjoy the highlights of the Thames, its historic bridges and many of London's key landmarks.

Get 25% off the registration fee when you sign up for the Stroke Association at stroke.org.uk/winterwalk2025



Stride for Stroke

Honour the 1.3 million stroke survivors in the UK by walking 1.3 million steps over 130 days (that's 10,000 steps a day!) at your own convenience and pace. Go to stroke.org.uk/stride2025 to sign up.



Skip for Stroke

1-28 February 2025

Skip for 15 minutes a day in February to help raise vital funds for stroke survivors and their families. Visit stroke.org.uk/skip2025 to register and claim your free skipping rope!

See stroke.org.uk for more events and ways to get involved in our work.

Crossword solution

Across: 3 Annual, 6 Vigorous, 8 Intellectual, 9 Aura, 10 Cosh, 12 Nirvana, 14 Ciao, 16 Lewd, 19 Vituperative, 20 Pigments, 21 Zydeco

Down: 1 Milieu, 2 Boulder, 3 Ashen, 4 Nautical mile, 5 Always, 7 Outmanoeuvre, 9 Arc, 11 Hid, 13 Arraign, 15 Idiocy, 17 Wreath, 18 Tempo

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



Homelife Stairlifts

Choose an independent life. Choose Homelife

Step by step solutions for every staircase



**10%
OFF***

QUOTE CODE:
HLSTN

Buy Direct from
a UK manufacturer
FREE No-obligation
survey and quotation

The perfect blend
of style and safety

NEXT DAY fitting
available

*"My stairlift
has been a real
lifesaver, allowing
me to move up
and down the
stairs without
any worries."*

Ms. Clarke, Lincolnshire

Use your phone or
tablet camera to scan!
**WATCH OUR
CUSTOMER JOURNEY
FROM ENQUIRY TO
INSTALLATION**



0808 169 9028

Text **HOMELIFE** to **60777**

www.homelifestairlifts.co.uk

Part of the Bespoke Stairlifts group




*10% discount available to new customers
purchasing a new stairlift through this advertisement,
quoting CODE HLSTN. Not available on rental or
reconditioned stairlifts. Not available in conjunction with
any other offer.

Travel Insurance for Over 50s

All conditions. All ages. All destinations.

- ✓ Voted UK's No.1 for Customer Care²
- ✓ 24/7 English speaking emergency helpline with unlimited medical cover available
- ✓ Up to £25,000 cancellation cover available
- ✓ Trusted by millions for 20+ years



Call our UK Call Centres FREE 

0800 294 5114

AllClearTravel.co.uk/strokeassociation

Scan to call



AllClearTM 
TRAVEL INSURANCE

In partnership with
Stroke
Association

AllClearTM Gold Plus achieved a Which? Best Buy.

¹ Discount applies to base premium of AllClear branded policies only. Discount expires at 23:59 on 31/12/24. ² Winner 2023 Broker Innovation Awards, Best Outstanding Service to the Customer. For more information please refer to T&Cs at allcleartravel.co.uk