

Support for Stroke patients and their families during Coronavirus Outbreak

Information from the Stroke Association North West

Stroke Recovery service - As of 17th March:

- We asked all our staff to work from home and closed all our offices including our base at Pemberton Health Centre - Our IT infrastructure and systems allow staff to work from home where required with minimal disruption. Our staff and volunteers are trained in and follow GDPR principles and guidelines as standard
- We will not be carrying out any home visits at this time until further notice as per government guidance. We are increasing telephone support and utilising our digital channels, focusing especially on those who are more vulnerable or socially isolated
- At this time, we will not be visiting people in nursing or care homes. Where appropriate we are liaising with care home staff to offer advice or guidance for residents affected by stroke, particularly if those people have recently been discharged from hospital
- We have postponed all group-based activities. We are sharing guidance with our groups and volunteers that includes some tips on how to stay connected during this time
- As per government advice, we are not visiting hospital sites at this time until further notice
- We are committed to ensuring our services are still able to identify people newly affected by stroke. We are continuing to work alongside the NHS teams with electronic referral systems in place enabling us to continue to receive referrals removing the need to access NHS hospital sites

We are ensuring that we continue to do all we can to support people affected by stroke throughout this period, whilst taking measures to reduce any risk to them and our own staff and volunteers.

Our Wigan and Leigh Stroke Recovery service continues to provide practical advice, emotional support and high-quality information following a stroke. Whether you are a stroke survivor, carer or family member, we will work with you to identify and address your needs and support you to rebuild your life after stroke. Contact us at wigansrs@stroke.org.uk or 01942 482133

We're actively working with other organisations to understand how we can coordinate our response to COVID-19 ensuring we can support those most in need at the right time.

We are working with Think Ahead Community Stroke Group to enable people to access peer support being offered by the team there. Contact 01942 824888 or info@think-ahead.org.uk

As a national organisation, we are maintaining updated information for stroke survivors on our website here <https://www.stroke.org.uk/news/coronavirus-information-people-affected-stroke>

Our Stroke Helpline is a place for information and support. If you or someone you know has been affected by stroke, or you want to know more information on how to reduce your risk of a stroke, please get in touch. Call our Stroke Helpline now on 0303 3033 100 or email helpline@stroke.org.uk

My Stroke Guide

Please find attached links and guidance for my Stroke Guide. My Stroke Guide is a trusted online support, all in one place, whenever you need it place, to guide you through your stroke recovery journey. It gives you free access to trusted information about different types of stroke, risk factors and secondary conditions, as well as advice on prevention and improving your own health.

You can find practical tools and over 200 videos, to help you to understand stroke and manage its effects. This includes a dedicated section for family and friends which provides information on the impact of stroke and advice about supporting loved ones.

The friendly, online forums connect you to others from the comfort of your own home. They are a great place to share your stroke experience and find out what others are doing to combat feelings of isolation and anxiety about the future.

There are a good number of thematic forums or groups set up already for areas or working age, older people, younger people, physical activity, crafts etc.

These groups are not run by Stroke Association, they are for anybody or anyone can set up their own

Resources

There are also easy-read resources on our website for people with Aphasia: <https://www.stroke.org.uk/finding-support/information-coronavirus-stroke-survivors#Easy%20read%2>

Please also see education resources, produced for schools but are finding to be helpful for people with communication difficulties: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education#english>

See also information about AbilityNet; AbilityNet believes in a digital world that's accessible to all, and like us, they believe that people with visual, physical and cognitive impairments should be able to access and use technology. Usually, volunteers offer support by visiting stroke groups or people's homes and helping them to use a laptop, computer, television, smartphone or tablet. They also signpost to useful tools, including apps, and support people to use My Stroke Guide.

Due to the current coronavirus pandemic, AbilityNet have paused their volunteer face-to-face activity and will update as soon as this support is available again. But they're starting a series of webinars to support people who are isolated, so that they can use the technology available to them and connect with people online.

There is also a host of free information on the AbilityNet website to support stroke survivors with technology, including a factsheet, blogs and a handy tool called 'My Computer My Way' that gives step-by-step instructions on adapting your device to make it easier to use."

To find out more, please call AbilityNet on 0800 269 545, send an email to enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk or visit <https://abilitynet.org.uk/news-blogs/abilitynet-live-free-events-about-technology-and-disability>

THINK AHEAD COMMUNITY STROKE GROUP

Stroke Information Centre Closed

In light of the current Coronavirus crisis, Think Ahead Stroke has closed its Wigan Stroke Information Centre to the public, stroke survivors and carers, and cancelled all seminars, groups and activities for the foreseeable future.

We urge everyone to consult and immediately follow NHS advice at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus - and take the necessary measures to stay safe.

Think Ahead Stroke is now considering new ways of adapting support available moving forward, and we will announce these new services as soon as we can.

However, we are still very much open for business, and if any stroke survivors require help or advice, then please do contact us through the usual channels on 01942 824 888 or email at info@think-ahead.org.uk

Useful community information can be found by following the link <https://www.think-ahead.org.uk/news/wigan-covid-19-useful-community-information>