

January 2025 Update – Cornwall Services

We hope that 2025 has started positively for you. As we begin a new year, we remain focussed upon ensuring that Cornwall stroke survivors and their families or carers have access to the support that they need, after a stroke, to make their best possible recoveries. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with many of you to ensure that this is achieved!

This update combines news from the **Stroke Association’s Cornwall Emotional Support Service** and from the **Cornwall Key Worker Service**.

News from the Cornwall Emotional Support Service

What difference has the Cornwall Emotional Support Service made?

The **Cornwall Emotional Support Service** has received **669 referrals** up to 31st December 2024, with **231 referrals** being made since April 2024.

In the last quarter the service **received 83 referrals** which is the **highest number of referrals** in a quarter since the service began in 2022. It is evident that the need for emotional support and specialised counselling for stroke survivors continues to grow.

Over the past three months **over half of the referrals** made have been for **working age stroke survivors** which is an **increase of 15%** on the previous quarters of 2024/25. NHS colleagues, working within the Integrated Community Stroke Service (ICSS) have made **73% of the 83 referrals** that have been received. Stroke survivors or their family members have made **22% of the referrals** received which is the **highest level of self-referral** since the service began. This clearly demonstrates how embedded the service has become within Cornwall and within the community.

Feedback received from those accessing the Cornwall Emotional Support Service between October and December 2024

“Our sessions have helped me find my inner strength again that had been buried under all that anger and frustration.”

“It’s been such a difficult time, but talking to you was the one thing that has felt easy when everything else was so hard.”

"Thanks for today, I really got a lot off my chest that's been worrying me. It's definitely helped being able to talk about it all with you".

"I dismissed the idea of counselling in the past, but it proved to be invaluable to me, and I got so much from it."

'Now Then' - A personal story of recovery and life after stroke

David Oddie, a Cornwall stroke survivor, has written and self-published a book called '**Now Then**' about his stroke recovery journey over the past two years.

David has provided the following introduction to his book.

'In March 2022, I suffered a severe brain stem stroke which drastically affected my swallow and balance, in particular. My family was told I would probably not survive. However, I did and spent the next four months in hospital where I began the arduous and ongoing process of recovery. During this time, I began writing letters to myself from different times in my life, to myself in the here and now. It was as if I was reminding myself who I was! The process included how my wife, who herself suffers from ME/CFS, and I coped with the struggles of discharge from hospital with tracheostomy in my neck, catheter and feeding PEG, culminating in a book, '**Now then**'.

David has kindly offered to share copies of the book 'in the hope that it may resonate with others on the stroke recovery journey in some way.'

If you would like a copy of '**Now Then**' or more information about the book please contact David directly by email: indracongress@hotmail.co.uk

News from the Cornwall Key Worker service

What difference has the Cornwall Key Worker Service made?

The **Cornwall Key Worker Service** has received **56 referrals** since October 2024 that have identified **415 individual needs** for local stroke survivors. **86%** of referrals have been received from NHS colleagues working in the **Integrated Community Stroke Service (ICSS)**.

Communication; emotional wellbeing and understanding of stroke have been key support needs identified by stroke survivors. Alongside the one-to-one support that the Key Worker team offer to each stroke survivor they have also: made **three**

referrals to 'Here For You' the Stroke Association's weekly volunteer telephone support service and have secured **three hardship grants of £150 each**. The **Stroke Association Hardship Grants** are a discretionary grant of up to £150 for stroke survivors in urgent critical need. This grant is a one-off payment for stroke survivors being supported by the Key Worker Service who are unable to pay for food or have no suitable clothing.

Feedback received from those accessing the Cornwall Key Worker service between October and December 2024

"We are so thankful for you. After {he} was discharged from hospital it felt like we were just cast aside. It's so nice to have a point of contact in you for anything that we need support with after {his} stroke." **Feedback from a stroke survivor's carer**

"I was in such an unhappy place but now I feel so much better, my confidence has improved, I have made new friends and I have taken up some new hobbies"
Feedback from a stroke survivor

"You have given me the motivation to keep trying." **Feedback from a stroke survivor with communication needs**

"You have somehow managed to get everything done in the space of a few weeks, that I have been asking for, for almost a year. You really are a superhero!" **Feedback from a stroke survivor's wife**

"I felt so much better after your last visit and I was able to talk about things I have been bottling up for years. I have been practicing my writing and keeping a diary and I am feeling more confident. Thank you". **Feedback from a stroke survivor**

"It is wonderful having you and Sara's support, the patients are speaking very highly of your service" - **Stroke Specialist Occupational Therapist (WEST)**

New online conversation group

The Cornwall Key Workers are developing an **online conversation/aphasia group** that will help stroke survivors to **gain confidence with their communication**. It is hoped it will evolve and progress into face-to-face communication workshops into the future.

For more information please email: cornwallstrokesupport@stroke.org.uk

Stroke Association news

Act FAST campaign

In November 2024, NHS England launched the first major update to the **Act FAST campaign** since 2009, urging the public to call 999 immediately if anyone experiences **ONE** of the three common symptoms:



Facial weakness

Can the person smile?
Has their mouth or eye drooped?



Arm weakness

Can the person raise both arms?



Speech problems

Can the person speak clearly
and understand what you say?



Time to call 999

If you see any one of these signs.

A **key aim** of the campaign is to **reduce the amount of time between spotting a sign of stroke and calling 999**, and to help people understand that **acting FAST** for any sign of a stroke that they see or experience **gives patients quicker access to specialist treatment** that can be **lifesaving** and could **improve their recovery journey**.

For more information about the **signs and symptoms** of stroke please visit the **Stroke Association website** by following this link: [Stroke: Signs and Symptoms](#)

Young People Connect – online group

Young People Connect is a monthly online group which provides an opportunity for younger stroke survivors to connect with others of a similar age and talk about things that matter to them. **The group is open to stroke survivors aged 18 – 45.**

To find out more about this group and the range of online activities that are currently available please visit the **Stroke Association website**:

[Online Stroke Activities Hub | Stroke Association](#)

Contact details

Cornwall Emotional Support Service	Cornwall Key Worker Service
Phone: 01872 301 689 Email: cornwall@stroke.org.uk Visit: Cornwall Emotional Support Service	Phone: 01872 300 350 Email: cornwallstrokesupport@stroke.org.uk Visit: Cornwall Key Worker Project
Stroke Association	
Stroke Support Helpline: 0303 3033 100 Visit: Stroke Association Strength through support	

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