

40th Birthday Celebrations

2023 is our 40th year and it has been a landmark year in our charity's history.



We've **nearly doubled our staff team and referrals** into BAS have grown by 100%. We're **working as part of an Integrated Community Stroke Service** and pathway, **offering six month reviews and support to people** after their stroke.

This, along with **the stroke service reconfiguration**, marks a **step change in stroke support** in the area. BAS has **also increased our group work and counselling** over the last year.

These **achievements only happen** with the **hard work of staff, trustees, volunteers, friends of BAS, funders and partners** in the community. I want to **thank them all** for **their support especially over the last couple of years** which have been particularly challenging.

We **hope you enjoy this newsletter** where you will **meet the new team, hear from stroke affected people and find out about ways you can support us** in our 40th year and beyond.

Rebecca Sheehy CEO



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Fundraising News

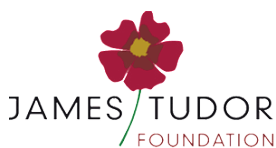
We have had a **great year** and are so **grateful** to everyone who did a **challenge** for us, or **made a donation**. Although we **cannot mention everything** that was done over the year or **name you all**, we **appreciate** all your efforts and **support**.

Without your support many of our services simply **wouldn't be able to continue** to run.
THANK YOU!

Highlights from 2022 include epic **bike rides** from Biarritz to Bristol, **Half Marathons**, **100km walks** around the Isle of Wight, Caribbean evenings, rugby matches, **Asda collections** and a **challenge to reach twice the height of Everest** on a **Versaclimber** in just 10 hours!



We have also had fantastic support from a number of Trusts and would like to thank the following:



Co-op Charity of the Year

We are **delighted** to **announce** that we have been chosen to be one of this year's beneficiaries of the **Co-op Local Community Fund**. This means that over the next year, for **every £1 spent in store, 1p** will be **donated** to us. You just need to be a **Co-op member** and choose **Bristol After Stroke** as your cause.



Badminton Tournament

In November, we had our **5th Annual Badminton Tournament**, which this year was **sponsored by UWE**. The day was a **great success**, with **93 participants** and **over £4,400** was **raised**. Our **youngest fundraiser** on the day was 9 year old **Ashwath** who **raised £39.70** from **baking and selling cakes** on the day. Thank you so much Ashwath!

Get Involved, help us fundraise!!!



In **2023**, we will **need to raise** even more **funds**, as our **referrals** and demand **increases**. If you have a **fundraising idea**, or would like to **chat** about how you could **get involved**, please contact **Jenny Hollis** on **07710 095 757** or **jenny.hollis@bristolafterstroke.org.uk**

Tribute Funds



Last year **£6,579** was **donated** to BAS **from in memory giving**. We are **hugely grateful** to those that choose to do this, it helps us help many others and is a great tribute to a loved one.

To support those that want to do this **we have set up tribute funds** where you can **remember** and celebrate **a loved one**. You can **share special memories, photos** and stories **with family and friends** and **raise funds to help others** affected by stroke to rebuild their life in your loved ones honour. If you've **lost someone special** and **wish to support in their memory** visit <https://bit.ly/InMemoryBAS>

Focus on:

Volunteer - Steve Burbage

You've had a stroke and were supported by Bristol After Stroke; How did the charity help you?

I found out about **Bristol after Stroke** in hospital after I had my TIA. Claire, one of **BAS' Stroke Key Workers** helped me by **offering guidance** and she **supported me to move forward with my life after stroke.**



How did you get involved?

I **decided not to return to work** following my stroke but to **volunteer instead.** I started by doing a **fundraising walk** and **now I volunteer at the South Glos Stroke Café and with Walking Football for stroke affected people.**

What do you do as a volunteer?

At the stroke café, I welcome people, provide them with refreshments, make sure they have someone to chat to and **generally make them feel at ease.** At **Walking Football, I help with the organisation** of the weekly sessions **as well as the socials!** I **encourage people** and if they fall over help them get back up again!

What would you say to other people interested in volunteering?

I have **met so many nice people since becoming a volunteer** and it has really helped me **with my stroke recovery.** I **enjoy what I do** and **would encourage others to volunteer.** The **rewards are endless** especially when you see how your volunteering benefits others.



Betty's Story

Interview with Betty Fanu

Betty can you tell us a bit about your stroke?

My name is Betty, I'm a psychiatric mental health nurse, my stroke occurred when I was on duty at a Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). That week had been a very difficult and challenging week for us staff.

On the day of the stroke, whilst walking out of the ward, I stumbled, my left foot felt weak, staff noticed my speech had changed, it was muffled, slow and slurred. I thought it was my new shoes that I stumbled on so I rushed to sit down. I attempted to pick up a bottle of coke to take a drink, but couldn't keep hold of it and dropped it.

In my head I didn't believe there was anything wrong with me. Even as the ambulance turned up I tried to send them away. At hospital, after the scan they told me that the scan showed I had suffered a stroke. The scan also showed an aneurysm. I didn't know what that meant but I couldn't say that, my speech was fluffy & slow.

What happened after your stroke, how did BAS support you?

I was admitted to hospital for a week, then discharged. 4 days later I was rushed to Southmead hospital, I had suffered another stroke. 2 days later I was discharged and referred to the stroke team and Bristol After Stroke. A kind hearted lady from BAS came and visited me at home. She explained to me what support is available.



I am a shy person, I didn't want to attend any of the groups at first, but Bristol After Stroke kept contacting me. This encouragement helped me.



The first session [café] I attended I stood by the door but I went back home. Next time I plucked up the courage to enter the room. I saw a couple at a table, it was their first day too. I felt like I'd won the lottery meeting some other first timers. We got on so well. I discovered that I live around the corner from my new friends and suggested that I drive us all to the next session, to give us all the encouragement to come back. This worked.



We then started to attend Portway group. I feel I learn something new every time I go. We like to know about each other and what's going on in our lives. I have benefitted tremendously.

I have had physical, practical & emotional help. I am so grateful to BAS, they have enlightened me, given me the awareness, signposted me to services, introduced me to friends and this has benefited my confidence hugely.

Dates for your Diary 2023

GROUP	ADDRESS	DAY	TIME
WEEKLY GROUPS			
Lyde Green Group	Lyde Green Community Centre	Wednesdays	1:00pm - 3:00pm
Croft End Group	Croft End Church, Speedwell	Wednesdays	9:45am - 11:45am
Bedminster Group	St Monica Wills, Cromwell Road	Thursdays	10:30am - 12:30pm
Portway Group	Port of Bristol Social Club, Shirehampton	Thursdays	1:30pm - 3:30pm
Gardening Group	Christ Church Downend, North Street	Wednesdays	2:00pm - 4:00pm
Walking Football	Horfield Leisure Centre, Dorian Road	Tuesdays	10:30am - 11:30am
MONTHLY CAFÉS			
South Glos Café	Badminton Road Methodist Church	2nd & 4th Thu of the Month	11:00am - 1:00pm
Bristol Café	St Monica Trust, Cote Lane, Bristol	3rd Wednesday of the Month	1:00pm - 2:30pm
South Bristol Community Hospital		4th Wednesday of the Month	2:00pm - 4:00pm
APHASIA GROUPS			
Virtual Aphasia Group	Zoom	Every other Wednesday	1:00pm - 2:00pm
Longwell Green Aphasia Group	Longwell Green Community Centre	Two Tuesdays per Month	1:30pm - 3:00pm
Thornbury Aphasia Group	The Chantry, 52 Castle Street	Two Tuesdays per Month	10:30am - 12:00pm
Yate Aphasia Group	Ridgewood Community Association, Yate	Two Tuesdays per Month	10:30am - 12:00pm
COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS			
Bristol Group Spring Course	The Park, Knowle	Thu 27th Apr - Thu 1st Jun	10:30am - 11:30am
South Glos Spring Course	The Park Centre, Kingswood	Fri 28th April - Fri 2nd Jun	10:30am - 11:30am
Bristol Summer Course	St Werburghs Community Centre	Mon 3rd Jul - Mon 7th Aug	10:30am - 11:30am
South Glos Summer Course	Brightwell Centre, Bradley Stoke	Wed 5th Jul - Wed 9th Aug	10:30am - 11:30am
Bristol Autumn Course	The Park, Knowle	Wed 4th Oct - Wed 8th Nov	10:30am - 11:30am
South Glos Autumn Course	The Park Centre, Kingswood	Thu 5th Oct - Thu 9th Nov	10:30am - 11:30am
MONTHLY ZOOM GROUPS			
Meet & Chat	Zoom (Volunteer Led)	1st Weds of the month from Feb	1:30pm - 2:30pm
NEXT STEPS			
Bristol / South Glos Group	Glenside Campus UWE, Blackberry Hill	3 Courses from Sep - Mar 2024 TBC	2:00pm - 4:00pm
COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS			
ACTion After Stroke	Croft End Church, Speedwell	Thu 4th May - Thu 1st June	10:00am - 12:00pm
ACTion After Stroke	Zoom	Thu 26th Oct - Thu 23rd Nov	10:00am - 12:00pm
Mindfulness	Zoom	12th July	10:30am - 11:30am

Groups, Cafés Courses and more!!

We have had such a **fantastic year with our groups, cafés and courses**. The face to face groups and cafés have been revived. We have **started an In Reach café at South Bristol Community Hospital** and we have **increased our support for people with Aphasia** thanks to new funding from South Glos Local Authority and Sirona.

Next Steps on video!

Our **Next Steps physiotherapy course** returned to **UWE** from online. We were also able to offer people **exercise films** that they can follow at home. We made these **films with help from Sport England!**



Learn something new!



Bristol Health Partners

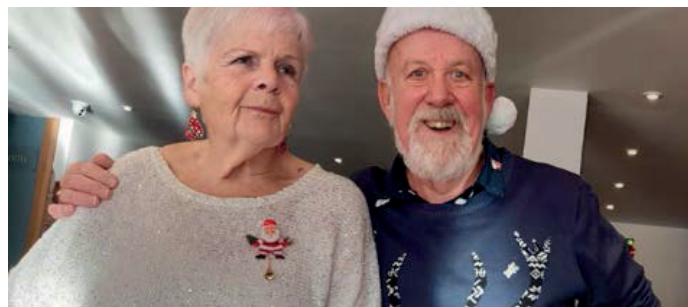
We have been hosting online **Stroke Education Sessions** in **partnership** with the **Stroke HIT**. **Local experts come and talk about different topics like medications and stroke, carer support, blood pressure, driving after stroke, supporting your mental wellbeing.** We have had **197 people sign up** to attend these groups so please join us! To attend or view past sessions go to our website; <https://bit.ly/StrokeHIT> or email us.

Groups

Our stroke support groups are in full swing since moving back to face to face. **Groups are a great way to meet others** who have experienced a stroke, **build friendships** and **try out new things**. We have **two new group leaders** bringing great energy to our group work too.



The groups have **experimented with Tai chi, creative writing**, had training about coping with crisis and adversity from the British Red Cross, **Seated Zumba** sessions and sessions that help with wellbeing and **processing recovery after stroke**.



We are working with the Royal West Academy of Art on an art competition as part of a Neuroscience festival. We are pleased that our work with the RWA will continue next year too. We also partnered with the **Tobacco Factory** and got to see their dress **rehearsal of the Snow Queen**. Our **groups and cafés are varied** so you are bound to find **something that suits you**.



Aphasia Groups

Aphasia is common after stroke. About a **third of people who have a stroke** have aphasia. **This year** we have increased what we have on **offer for people with Aphasia.** We have;

- A **zoom group** that happens every other week
- **Three face to face groups** in **South Gloucestershire** - Yate, Longwell Green and Thornbury
- **Communication workshops** that happen across Bristol and South Glos



All these groups **offer** people an **opportunity to practice conversation and build confidence.** Inspired by work with a poet the zoom **group entered the Lyra poetry festival** - a great achievement.



Drop in to our Stroke Cafés

We **run drop in Cafés** in **Bristol and South Glos**, so **come and join us!** We generally **have a speaker** on different topics **but there is always time to meet others**, speak to staff and volunteers **have some fun.**



Wellbeing Day and Looking Forward

We were **really happy to have** our wellbeing event in **October** last year. We had a **great panel of speakers** where we **talked about** our **new services** – what it means to **work with our strengths after stroke**, the **emotional impact of stroke**, **exercise** and what it means to **keep well after stroke**.



We have also been looking forward and going to our groups to discuss what the next 5 years should look like as we start to think about our next five year strategy.



Memorial Café – A Special Remembrance

BAS held a special **café** this year in memory of all those that passed away but couldn't say goodbye to over lockdown. We want to thank all who contributed to a very moving event, especially the **Rossetta Life group**, **Interact**, **Claire Angell** for making our tree of remembrance, **Hazel** who composed and delivered a poem, **Gill** who facilitated and **Val** from the staff team for planning and leading it.

Hazel's Story

“ How am I going to manage my broken brain? ”

I had my stroke four years ago and it **changed my life**. Before I had my stroke, I **was a published poet**; busy selling my poetry books **and being part of poetry groups in Bristol**.

After my stroke, I was unable to speak English very well (I could speak some German), I **couldn't read, write or do maths** and my **speech was terrible**.

I thought my brain is broken – how am I going to manage a broken brain?



I was also helpfully **signposted from BAS to Rosetta Life** (a performance-based project in partnership with Bristol After Stroke). It **really helped me to feel that I could express myself**, even if I couldn't speak much. I **began to draw** and **these drawings are now displayed in some of the exhibitions** that I made. Bristol After Stroke (BAS) have given me lots of support. I first had counselling.

As I could only speak a little at this point, I had an experienced counsellor who enabled me to express myself without the use of words, by using ribbons and support with the conversation. It was so wonderful.

As well as the counselling, I joined an Aphasia group on Zoom with the BAS Speech and Language Therapist, Barbara Greenwood. It was really important for me to meet others with aphasia and such a relief: we are still friends now. This was absolutely made marvellous. However, the biggest turning point was probably when Barbara, invited Poet Beth Calverley to some of our group sessions. Before I met Beth, I said my poetry has been broken by my stroke, I'm not a poet anymore.

Beth, through the aphasia group, was part of turning me into a poet again. She essentially **reclaimed my sense of identity**.

I can now sometimes express my new self through poetry... Us post stroke people have to learn what our new life is going to be like.

With my confidence, now starting to build, I suggested that our Aphasia group perform as part of the Lyra Poetry Festival. I put together a special poem for it and we performed it in the festival; it was very special.

From this I have also been able to have the confidence to speak to others. All this has not only helped me, but to raise awareness about aphasia.

I am now going a step further and will be working with Barbara and another person affected by aphasia, to help design a new aphasia course at BAS.

The support I have received from Bristol After Stroke, and the arts has turned me back in to a person. A person who has aphasia, but I am also an artist again.

Read full version on our website
www.bristolafterstroke.org.uk/strokestories

Our New Stroke Key Worker Service



Bristol After Stroke **launched its new Stroke Key Worker** service in Bristol and South Gloucestershire this year. We now have **a team of 8 Stroke Key Workers**. They are **providing vital support to stroke affected people** in our region offering initial support and 6 month reviews. They are **also providing communication workshops for people with aphasia and their family or friends**. The **workshops have been co-produced with people with aphasia**.

Our **Key Workers** continue to **provide practical, social and emotional support** – helping people to navigate the sometimes **complex journey of life after stroke**. The **team** is now working as **part of an integrated community stroke team**.

This means we are **for the first time in our region the voluntary sector (BAS and the Stroke Association) are fully part of the stroke pathway, working with community health providers Sirona care and health, as one team**. **Sirona provide** community health services at home like, **occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech therapy, reablement workers, nurses, dieticians and psychologists**.

Book Now for Action After Stroke!

Have you heard about **Action After Stroke**, an exciting **psychotherapeutic course** that has been run by BAS since 2014? It **runs over 4 weeks** and is based on **acceptance and commitment therapy**. It aims to **help participants with anxiety or low mood** and help you **to live life to the 'full' following stroke**. Hear how it helped others here: <https://bit.ly/Actionafterstroke>



“ It really changed my outlook on how I was going to cope with things for the future ”

A Day in the Life

BAS Key Worker George Field



What I've learnt in the 8 months of being a Key Worker at Bristol After Stroke **is that no one day is the same, and this makes for an interesting working week**, working alongside some amazing people.

First thing this morning I'm chatting with a keyworker colleague to confirm the guest speaker at our December Stroke Café event at St Monica's. Next up I'm emailing a reply to a colleague in ICSS Sirona, confirming a planned visit for next week and sending some paperwork out.

First meet up this morning is an informal coffee morning on 'teams' with other keyworkers, checking in and sharing planned work. Then some admin time and a chance to prep for my next visit.

Today's visit is local so a chance to get some steps in and meet with someone relatively new in their stroke journey. It's a great opportunity to check in and start by asking 'How are you?'

We talk about **how the stroke has affected**

them and identify what help and support we can offer in their journey. In this instance it made for some signposting to community groups, a referral to have a benefits check, a discussion around ongoing community rehab support and also a referral to one of Bristol After Stroke's cafés.

Following on from today's home visit I'm back home and writing up the initial assessment and planning a date for the 6-month review.

The write up has allowed me to consider areas we can revisit at the 6-month review. Once the write up is complete, I complete other admin tasks around today's visit, return calls I had received and then complete my to do list for tomorrow - there's nothing better than a fully ticked list - well till tomorrow that is!

Think and Act F.A.S.T. if you see any single one of these signs of a stroke:



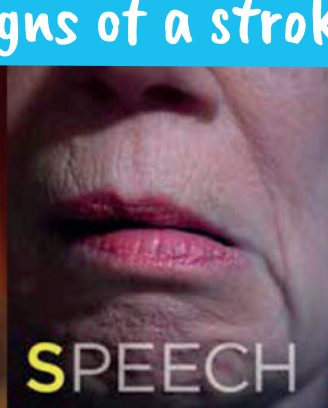
FACE

**Has their face fallen on one side?
Can they smile?**



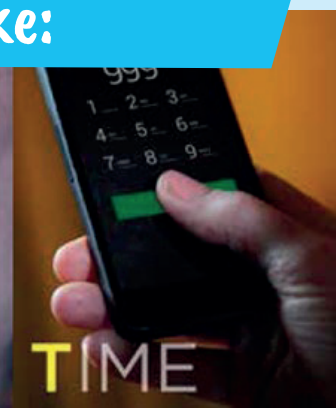
ARMS

Can they raise both arms and keep them there?



SPEECH

Is their speech slurred?

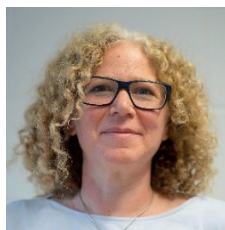


TIME

Even if you're not sure, call 999.

Meet the Team

BRISTOL AFTER STROKE STAFF



Rebecca Sheehy
Chief Executive



Gemma Holden
Operations Manager



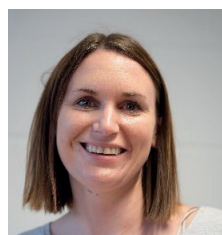
Louise Forrest
Senior Counsellor



Amy Gill
Service Support Officer



Tracey Robinson
Service Administrator



Jenny Hollis
Fundraising Officer



Lucy Stockall
Volunteer Coordinator

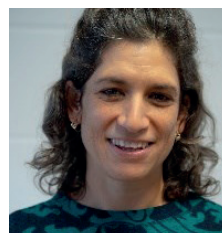
STROKE KEY WORKERS



Maddy Aulakh



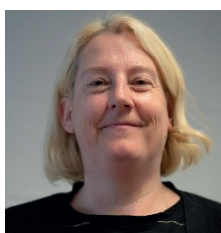
Val Brittain



Tanya Chowdhury



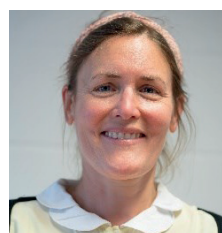
Becky Cox



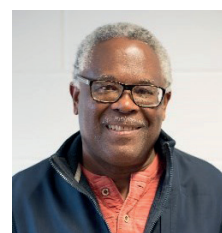
Emma Eddy



George Field



Claire Lambourne



Mike Lewis

GROUP LEADERS



Stella Fisher



Bex Hall



Barbara Greenwood
Online Aphasia

In 2022 we welcomed 2 new Trustees to Bristol After Stroke. Here they introduce themselves:

Paul Knowles

Born in Liverpool, by background and qualification I am a **HR Director and General Manager** with over **40 years' international experience**. More recently I was the **CEO of the London Irish Centre**, a Charity based in Camden.

I now **live in Bristol**, and I am **excited** about joining as a trustee. I can **clearly see the critical importance of the work done by BAS** and **look forward to helping the Charity** continue to **develop and grow**.



Sandeep Buddha

I am a **stroke consultant** at **Southmead hospital** originally from **India**. I made the **decision to volunteer** for **Bristol after Stroke** after realising how **tough life** was for **stroke affected** people **during the pandemic**. After a few months of **volunteering**, I chose to **sign up as a trustee**.

Becoming a **trustee** is both a **rewarding way to help my community** and a way to **learn fantastic new skills**. I hope that **this charity will serve as a pillar of support** for **all the stroke patients in Bristol** and the surrounding areas.



With a Regular Gift, we can:

- **Be flexible** with where our money goes
- **Support more people**
- **Plan ahead**
- **Make long-term improvements** for stroke affected people and their families

If you would like to become a regular giver, go to:

bit.ly/BASregulargiving

Or email Jenny Hollis at jenny.hollis@bristolafterstroke.org.uk

Become a Regular Giver and help us to continue our work



Our Impact

Here are some of the headlines from our evaluations this year

500

Referrals
100% increase
on last year

340

**Sessions of
Counselling**
23% increase
on last year

158

Group Members
across our
groups

900

**People
Supported**
through services

After a Six Month Review

initial evaluation 2022

100%

said that the service
was good or very
good

96%

valued the opportunity
to discuss their needs
and concerns

80%

said it improved
their ability to help
themselves

76%

said it improved
their understanding
of services

After Counselling

evaluation 2022

100%

Feel more able to face
challenges in their life

91%

felt they had changed for
the better

“ [The counsellor] is brilliant and BAS is too, knowing support is there is invaluable and has given me much hope and comfort in dark moments. ”

“ Before I didn't really believe in counselling, didn't think it would help, so now I have changed my mind. ”