

2019 - New Year, New Opportunities!

Become a Friend of Bristol After Stroke!

Bristol After Stroke is building a community of support for everyone affected by stroke. Together last year we helped over 700 people in our area. As a Friend you can simply be part of our community, or you can become more involved.

Being a Friend of Bristol After Stroke enables you to keep in touch with what we're up to and help us to help people to live well after stroke.

You can become a Friend of Bristol After Stroke for just £15.00 per year, but if you are able to give more a small monthly donation will support the ongoing work of Bristol After Stroke.

Volunteer with Bristol After Stroke!

Volunteers are an essential part of the Bristol After Stroke community. Our new Volunteering Development project (see p 3) is working to recruit new volunteers, improve your experience with Bristol After Stroke, and widen the range of opportunities to volunteer with us. We offer full support, training, and an annual celebration event specially for our volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering - be that in the short or long term, one-off or once a week, then please get in touch with Lucy Stockall, Volunteer Coordinator, on 0117 9647657; email lucy.stockall@bristolafterstroke.org.uk or visit www.bristolafterstroke.org.uk



Building our community of support



We like to be sociable so please "like" us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter to keep up to date with news, views, events and information

Our website www.bristolafterstroke.org.uk provides more in-depth information about stroke and our services, and links to further support



Caring, supporting,
working together

Stroke HIT launch and work plan

This year sees a more integrated approach to working to prevent, treat and support people after stroke. Bristol Health Partners - a consortium of NHS trusts, Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire CCG, the two universities and Bristol City Council - has launched a Health Integration Team for Stroke.

If you work in the area of stroke or have been affected by stroke you can get involved.

See p 3-4 for more details

Dates for your diary 2019

Bristol Stoke Café, Monthly, Wednesdays, 1.30 - 3.15pm

Oatley Hall, St Monica Trust, Cote Lane

16th January, 20th February, 20th March, 17th April, 15th May, 19th June, 17th July, 21st August, 16th October, 20th November, 18th December

South Gloucestershire Stroke Café, Monthly, Fridays, 11.00am - 1.00pm

Badminton Road Methodist Church, Badminton Road, Downend

11th January, 8th February, 8th March, 12th April, 10th May, 14th June, 12th July, 9th August, 13th September, 11th October, 8th November, 13th December

In Reach at Southmead Hospital Every Tuesday afternoon, 2.00 - 3.30pm

Brunel Building, Ward 7, Gate 3

Stroke Café - last Tuesday afternoon of the month

Next Steps Wednesday 31st January - 20th March, 2.00 - 4.00pm

University of the West of England, Glenside Campus

ACTion after Stroke Wednesday 24th April - 22nd May, 10.30am - 12.30pm

The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds

Mindfulness Tuesday 22nd October, 10.30am - 12.30pm

Studio 9, Gatehouse Centre, Hartcliffe

Aphasia Drop-In, Monthly, Mondays, 2.00 - 4.00pm

The Station, Silver Street, Bristol

7th January, 4th February, 4th March, 1st April, 13th May, 3rd June, 1st July, 5th August, 2nd September, 7th October, 4th November, 2nd December

Volunteer Day Tuesday 4th June, 10.00am - 3.00pm

The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds

Bristol After Stroke's annual celebration and training event for volunteers

Wellbeing Day Friday 27th September, 9.30am - 2.30pm

Oatley Hall, St Monica Trust, Cote Lane

Bristol After Stroke's annual conference for service users, carers, partner organisations, Friends and supporters



Our new website - one year on

It has been a year since we launched our new look website. We have been very happy with its look and feel, but now we would like to review and refresh it. If you have any comments about the style, how you use the website or any suggestions for content please let us know. You can contact us or send us a message through the website

www.bristolafterstroke.org.uk/pages/3-contact-us

Boost for volunteering at Bristol After Stroke with funding from Bristol Older People's Alliance supported by Bristol Aging Better

Lucy Stockall, Bristol After Stroke's new Volunteer Coordinator introduces the project:

The prospect of a New Year makes us think about the things we might like to change or even do more of, ways to improve our quality of life, a chance to set a New Year's Resolution. Volunteering can be a great New Year's resolution, and it doesn't need to be just for the New Year, you can do it for life.

So, why volunteer?

There are so many reasons to volunteer: it can reduce loneliness, get you out of the house, improve your mental and physical health, help you get fit, give you a sense of purpose and increase feelings of self-worth! If that isn't enough of a reason for you to volunteer there is also the incentive that should you want to get back into paid work, it's great for your CV as well!

At Bristol After Stroke, we have a range of volunteering opportunities with varying time commitments. You could volunteer at a weekly Stroke Support Group for up to 3 hours a week, or for a few hours a month at our drop-in Stroke Café's in Bristol and South Gloucestershire. We also have ad hoc volunteering opportunities. So, if you think you might be interested in volunteering – and giving up some of your free time for a fantastic cause please do get in touch.



Volunteer Focus: Q&A with Sue & Rob

Where do you volunteer?

We volunteer at the weekly Portway Stroke Support Group which takes place on a Thursday afternoon at the Port of Bristol Social Club, Shirehampton.

How long have you volunteered there?

Rob: 'I've been volunteering for 14 years'

Sue: 'I've been volunteering for 5 years'

What made you get involved?

Rob: 'I started as a volunteer driver, a friend of mine was a driver for Bristol After Stroke and they needed more help which was how I got involved in the beginning, now I volunteer at group.'

Sue: 'I went along to a social Christmas Lunch and 5 years on and I'm still here volunteering!'

What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

'Talking to people!'

'We enjoy being able to help people, cheering them up and being there for them and feeling like you are doing something worthwhile.'

What would you say to other people who might be interested in volunteering?

'It's great to be part of a group that cares about one another. You get as much back from volunteering as you give.'

'Get out and do it!'



New services for Bristol residents after stroke

Bristol After Stroke is pleased to report that we will shortly be able to offer In Reach at the BRI and South Bristol Community Hospital on a monthly basis, and our very popular Next Steps physiotherapy-led short course to residents of Bristol.

We thank the trustees of the James Tudor Foundation for the offer of funding these new services in Bristol for a year and look forward to letting you know when they are up and running. Look out for announcements on our website and social media from April.

African and Afro-Caribbean experiences of stroke services in Bristol

Bristol After Stroke has long recognised that our reach into different communities is not as comprehensive as it should be, so we were delighted to be asked by researchers at UWE to assist with a study of experiences of stroke services from diverse perspectives. Ultimately, we want to find out how we can make our services as accessible as possible.

The first stage has been a small interview survey of people in Bristol from African and Afro-Caribbean origin. Initial findings suggest there needs to be a greater push for awareness raising in partnership with community organisations around risks of stroke, including the risk of having a stroke at a younger age. Findings also point to the need for making sure the psycho-social and practical support provided is appropriate to different circumstances, including for those with complex conditions such as sickle cell anaemia.

The next stage will be to share full findings with those who participated in the study and hold a collaborative community meeting to exchange information and experiences. Further research is planned subject to funding.

Val's Story



Val had her stroke in 2015, only a year after moving to Yate, South Gloucestershire, from Northampton. It was also on the day she received a brand new bright yellow car. Sadly, for her, she has been unable to return to driving – yet!

Val's was a brain stem stroke, and she credits the team at Southmead Hospital for saving her life. In the early days the stroke affected her sight, speech and movement but now, three years on, her main issues are with getting around – not being able to feel her left leg has left her with knee joint problems. Looking back, though, she realises there had been some warning signs in the months leading up to the stroke as she had felt some weakness in her leg.

As with many people after stroke, excellent care in hospital and rehabilitation was followed by little further support. It was only after going into a nursing home while her house was renovated that she came into contact with Bristol After Stroke. She

Originally from the Black Country, Val had a varied and eventful career ranging from an engineering apprenticeship to running her own businesses, including a fashion shop! She was a keen traveller and still has an ambition to go to New Zealand. She is passionate about using whatever abilities and resources she has to help other people. To that end she has joined in with the Stroke Health Integration Team (HIT) (see above), and now wants to get involved in fundraising for Bristol After Stroke by promoting our cause whenever she can.

had counselling which she found “so good, so useful”, followed by our Next Steps programme to help with her mobility. She now attends the South Gloucestershire Stroke Café using community transport to get her to and from Downend. She loves the café – and say it has helped her 100% knowing that there are people out there to help as much as they can. As well as benefiting from services provided by Bristol After Stroke, Val attends the MS Therapy Centre in Bradley Stoke where she finds the oxygen tank to be hugely beneficial. She says the stroke may have robbed her of her physical abilities, but she is still as active as ever mentally.

Health Integration Team (HIT) for Stroke in Bristol and the surrounding area

“We are committed to preventing strokes and improving the lives of people affected by stroke through working together beyond the limits of individual organisations, in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG)”

Bristol After Stroke is delighted to be involved in developing an integrated approach to stroke across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire which was launched at an event at Circomedia in November 2018. The Stroke Health Integration Team (HIT) will join up local agencies, voluntary organisations and local people with the clinical commissioning group (CCG), with the aim of preventing strokes and improving the lives of the 1,300 people affected by stroke in the region each year.

The Stroke HIT is supporting the CCG revised strategy for stroke treatment in the area. Ideas include addressing imbalances in the care across the region, to ensure that everyone can be supported back into their home or a rehabilitation setting with the right professional advice and therapy.

You too can get involved!

If you work in the area of stroke or have been affected by stroke and would like to know more about the work of the HIT and how you can get involved, then sign up to our members list.

Contact the Stroke HIT team:

strokehit@bristolhealthpartners.org.uk



Peter & Phyllis's Story

To read more about any of these stories, please visit www.bristolafterstroke.org.uk



The secret to a happy marriage - even after stroke!

Peter & Phyllis are both 80 and have been married for nearly 60 years. They grew up close to one another in Brighton and met in their local hospital - both there visiting relatives! They moved to Bristol when Peter joined British Aerospace. This year they are preparing to celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary with a cruise in September. Peter jokes that he's trying to stay fit so he can enjoy the trip.

Peter and Phyllis' marriage has been tested in recent years after Peter had a series of TIAs that have left him with mobility and balance difficulties. He is trying to learn to walk again but finding it increasingly hard. He relies on Phyllis to push him out and about in his wheelchair. As keen and active parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, former ramblers, the couple are sad not to get out and about as much as they used to. They are stalwart attendees of Bristol After Stroke's monthly Bristol Café at the St Monica Trust in Westbury-on-Trym using the offered community transport to get them there.

Like so many people, Peter and Phyllis remember vividly the day they first realised there was going to be such a change in their life together. Peter was getting up one morning in March 2016 and found he couldn't move and then fell to the ground. Phyllis immediately called an ambulance. Peter was admitted to Southmead Hospital and underwent tests but was discharged after being diagnosed with a TIA. The next day it happened again, and then several more times, with his health and mobility declining each time. Peter jokes that the doctors told him, after a scan, that he had "brain wasting"!

They credit their continued happiness together - despite the limitations they face - to their long marriage and the plenty of offers of support they've had from Bristol After Stroke and other agencies - and we always see them laughing together.

Living Together After Stroke

At our 2018 Wellbeing Day, we were excited to launch a new project providing emotional support for couples.

We have been collaborating on with The Harbour counselling service in Bristol. "Living Together with Stroke" is aimed at helping couples deal with the impact and changes after one partner has been affected by stroke. This is a small-scale project (on offer in Bristol only) and is currently free-of-charge as it is funded by Bristol Older People's Funding Alliance working with Bristol Ageing Better.

It involves one or two specially trained therapists visiting the couple at home for 6-10 sessions over the period of a 3-6 months. Time is spent talking to both parties together and individually with a focus is on enhancing the communication between the two. If permission is given, the couple can have a daily activity or task of their choosing filmed with the resultant video being shared back with the couple so that they might see things that would otherwise not be acknowledged. The therapist makes it safe to talk about reactions to the filmed activity and impact of the stroke in general on the relationship. There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that emotional closeness within a relationship can enhance wellbeing and become a protective factor against life's challenges. This project aims to help the couple build and grow that sense of wellbeing for all concerned.

The project is being delivered by staff at The Harbour. If you would like to be referred, please contact us:

Email: office@bristolafterstroke.org.uk

Telephone: 0117 964 7657



Highlights of 2018

Bristol Stroke Café

The Bristol Stroke Café runs on the third Wednesday of every month 1.30-3.15pm at St Monica's in Westbury-On-Trym. The Café continues to grow in popularity and last year we had 20-30 people attending each month. We had speakers from REMAP, Centre for Deaf, Avon Fire & Rescue and Good Gym as well as many others.

The café is a drop-in which enables people who have had a stroke and their friends and families to meet others, make friends and listen to useful information.

In amongst the useful talks we also have entertainments from Interact Stroke Support and the Bristol ReVoice Choir for people affected by aphasia. In a departure from the usual refreshments, in August we had a delicious cream tea with scones made by regular volunteer Deborah.



South Gloucestershire Stroke Café

The South Gloucestershire Stroke Café runs on the second Friday of the month 11.00am -1.00pm at Badminton Road Methodist Church in Downend. The Café continues to thrive and is regularly attended by 30-40 people. We are helped enormously by the regular team of volunteers committed to supporting it.

As well as practical talks from organisations such as Age UK, the MS Therapy Centre and Deaf Blind UK, we also had talks on local areas of interest such as the Frenchay Museum and the Clifton Suspension Bridge. The year was rounded off with Christmas music provided by Ant Miles and a bring & share lunch.



Community transport to help you get to the cafes

Bristol After Stroke can provide community transport to help make the cafes more accessible. Please remember to book your place in advance to avoid disappointment!

Wellbeing Day 2018

We started the day with what is fast becoming a Bristol After Stroke tradition – a fun, energetic warm-up session to lively music led by Lin Cornish who is well known to our Stroke support Group members as their "personal trainer".

Our speakers this year discussed some of the more hidden aspects stroke risk and impacts.

- We heard from the nutritionists, Jo Henry & Caroline Bignell, Bristol Community Health, about the link between diabetes and stroke, and about how important it is to manage the condition to reduce the risk of having a stroke. Maintaining a healthy diet and monitoring blood sugar levels are the most important factors
- Therapists Liz Salter & Jeni Edge from The Harbour, a local counselling service for people with life-limiting and terminal illnesses, introduced their new collaborative project with Bristol After Stroke – Living Together After Stroke (see page 5) for couples struggling with the impact of stroke on relationships
- Vivienne Mills, RNIB Sight Loss Advisor, discussed services for vision and sight rehabilitation after stroke particularly for people affected by hemianopia, where part of the field of vision is lost
- We heard about the development and forthcoming launch of the Stroke HIT from our Trustee, Stephen Hill, and the HIT Manager Jan Connett.
 - And finally, University of Cardiff researcher, Misbah Gladwyn-Khan, discussed her ongoing study of the effectiveness of Reg Morris' self-help book "Rebuilding Your Life After Stroke".

We always take the opportunity of this event to publicly thank some of our stalwart volunteers and generous donors. We heard from Ron Brown, Fishponds Group member and regular at the Bristol Stroke Café, about his life before and after stroke.

On a final note we'd like to say thank you to all our volunteers who helped on the day, the St Monica Trust, and South Gloucestershire Council for all their support without whom this event could not happen.

A day with Val

Val is one of our four Stroke Support Coordinator's. Val's area is South Gloucestershire.

"I am really lucky to work here. It's a large diverse geographical area – I am as likely to be in Filton as Thornbury, in Oldland Common as Patchway.

On a typical day I will check my computer to see where my visits are that day and organise all the information I will need for clients. I may make two or three home visits a day, usually spending at least an hour with new clients. Home visits are the core of what I do and by their nature no two visits are ever the same. Meeting people in their own homes is a pleasure and a privilege. It's really important to me that, as a guest in their home, I come to listen and support and work out how Bristol After Stroke can assist their recovery journey.

The variety of the job is one of its main pleasures. Days are rarely the same, with In Reach at Southmead and Next Steps (physiotherapy) course at UWE Glenside, together with the two monthly Cafés the only regular events in my diary.

I love the South Gloucestershire Stroke Café. We have lovely bright premises with good access and parking and now the acoustics have been improved everyone seems to be able to hear. Well attended, warm and friendly, this is a highlight for me every month. It is a chance to catch up with people on my case load who I perhaps wouldn't otherwise see and equally I love encouraging new referrals to attend and seeing how they are welcomed and supported. What do we talk about? Not always about stroke. There is a real sense there that life after stroke can be okay after all – especially when its shared with others who have experienced the same thing.

There is definitely life after stroke."



Stroke Support Groups

Bristol After Stroke manages five weekly peer support groups offering people affected by stroke ongoing rehabilitation, social and emotional support. They are facilitated by a team of Group Organisers and volunteers.

The groups have been experimenting with lots of new and different activities this year. They tried card making, jewellery making, music, yoga, quoits, croquet and dressing up! Exercise sessions are designed especially for people with disabilities stemming from their stroke. The Fishponds Stroke Support Group for younger people have been making and crafting thanks to the help and generosity of volunteers from Wates Construction.



Ways to wellbeing

Understanding & Managing fatigue after stroke

Everyone gets tired after a long day, after stress or after exercising but post-stroke fatigue can be something different. Post-stroke fatigue is extremely common and is your body's way of telling you it's still recovering. This can take time.



Causes of post-stroke fatigue include:

- Movement impairments, which cause you to expend more energy than before stroke
- Post-stroke pain, which requires immense energy to cope with
- Sleep disorders like insomnia or sleep apnoea, which interfere with quality sleep
- Medication that has fatigue listed as a potential side effect
- Your brain trying to heal itself, which requires huge amounts of energy

There are also emotional causes of fatigue, which should not be overlooked, such as:

- Post-stroke depression - which requires immense energy to deal with
- Burnout - from all the hard work required during recovery and rehabilitation
- Anxiety - whether from fear of having another stroke or the sudden lifestyle changes caused by stroke

It's also important to know that the severity of post stroke fatigue is not correlated with the severity of your stroke. Even if you had a mild stroke, you can still feel extreme fatigue.

Whilst there is no particular treatment for post-stroke fatigue, there are ways to manage it and help keep your recovery on track. First of all, recognise that it is a symptom of your stroke - learn to accept it and forgive yourself!

Tips include:

- Pace yourself, give yourself more time to do things, and keep to a routine if possible. You could try keeping a journal to keep track of the patterns of tiredness, then you
- Rest whenever you can & conserve energy - take naps if time allows
- Stay active - regular exercise can, perhaps counter-intuitively, help with fatigue. You can start with just a few minutes a day and build up from there.
- Make sure you eat well and keep hydrated
- Stay positive - don't be put off by having to rest after an activity or finish early. Do the things you enjoy and have fun!

If it continues for a long time or is particularly bothering you, it may be worth asking your GP to check for any other underlying conditions.

For more information and advice talk to your Stroke Support Coordinator. With thanks to Different Strokes and Flint Rehab. For further discussion about fatigue after stroke go to www.flintrehab.com/2017/overcoming-fatigue-after-stroke The Stroke Association also has plenty of information and advice: <https://www.stroke.org.uk/effects-of-stroke/tirednessand-fatigue>



Fundraising news

We would not be able to do what we do, or do it as well, if it wasn't for the fantastic people, groups and companies who donate, challenge and sponsor events in aid of Bristol After Stroke

Our thanks and appreciation go out to everyone who has supported us with fundraising & donations in the last year. We have had over donations, grants and sponsorship from 112 individual people, societies and clubs, companies and grant making trusts.

Aviva Centre, Stoke Gifford

Every month the Aviva Centre in Stoke Gifford, home to Aviva Insurance, Diligensa and Capita, holds a charity collection on the main door and in May 2018 it was the turn of Bristol After Stroke to be beneficiary. James Smith, long-time volunteer Jenny Smith's son, nominated us, and we joined him and colleagues to collect a huge bag of £1 coins totalling over £1000!

Exel/DHL Retired Staff Association

Two years of fundraising efforts by this group have flown by and by the time they came to an end in April 2018, they had raised generously supported Bristol After Stroke with £2000. The DHL UK Foundation have matched their achievements with donations totalling another £2000. We are so grateful to have had this support and thanks very much to Treasurer Bill Hardy and his team.

TasteTech

Sometimes fundraising can be tough – like when you have to judge a cake competition! We were delighted to get a call out of the blue from south Bristol-based food technology company, TasteTech, telling us we have been selected as Charity of the Year and inviting us to meet the



team at a Halloween-themed coffee morning. Staff had risen to the Great British Bake Off-style challenge and the resultant creations sold off to raise money. All we had to do was judge the cakes (hard) and collect the cheque (easy)! Thank you so much to all at TasteTech!



Coop Community Fund

Use your Coop Membership to support Bristol After Stroke! The Coop contributes 1% of what you spend and the proceeds of plastic carrier bag sales to charity. We have been fortunate to have been chosen by stores around Bristol in all four rounds.



This year it's the turn of the Downend CoopFood store supporting our work in South Gloucestershire until November 2019.

Help us to help stroke affected people

Get involved in fundraising for Bristol After Stroke

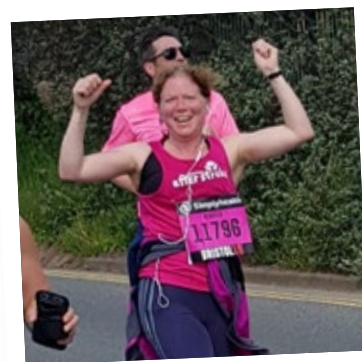
We rely heavily on donations – large and small. We love to hear from anyone who has an idea for fundraising. In the office we can help with getting the idea off the ground, publicising it through our networks, website, social media and further afield, and with marketing materials and logos, etc.

Contact our Fundraising Officer:
0117 964 7657 or
office@bristolafterstroke.org.uk

Get involved... We're putting together a team for this year's Bristol 10k in May

Last year, five people ran the Bristol 10k – including Rebecca, our Chief Executive, and volunteers Lizzie Stafford and Len Osgood and friends David Osgood and Clive Gregor. We raised over £2700. We'd like to beat that this year so we're challenging friends, volunteers and supporters to run with us in memory of Len and his support for Bristol After Stroke.

And if you have other challenges in mind just let us know. We can help you set up online fundraising pages on Just Giving, Virgin Money Giving and Local Giving, help with publicising your efforts, and we have Bristol After Stroke running vests, banners, buckets, tins and other materials!



Sporting challenges in aid of Bristol After Stroke

Three very good friends of Bristol After Stroke set themselves sporting challenges this autumn. Praveen Kumar, our physiotherapist Next Steps partner, organised a badminton tournament at UWE, raising over £2700 in sponsorship and team entries. He's keen to organise another one later in the year so keep an eye on our website and social media for more information. Former trustee, John Davies, ran a whole marathon in Munich in October and James Trott went one better and ran, swam and cycled the Tenby Iron Man.



Ring O'Bells Summer Charity Family Fundraising Day

This year the Ring O'Bells pub in in Coalpit Heath held its summer family fun day in aid of Bristol After Stroke. Landlady, Pauline Williams' brother-in-law had a stroke recently and now attends our South Gloucestershire Stroke Café regularly with his wife. Unfortunately, after the fabulously hot and sunny summer the day of the event was the only day it rained! Nevertheless, a fabulous £1425 was raised and Pauline joined us at the South Gloucestershire Stroke Café in October to present the cheque.



A "stroke of luck" at charity event as hole-in-one wins golfer a Porsche: Bristol After Stroke benefits from Bristol & Clifton Golf Club's Charity Golf Day in June 2018

Bristol After Stroke was the beneficiary of the Captain's Charity Golf Day at Bristol and Clifton Golf Club when David Battrick (pictured with team mates, Alan Thoy, Club Captain, and Peter Scott, Chair of Bristol After Stroke) used his four-iron to secure the £60,000 Porsche – which he will now be sharing with the other three golfers he was playing with at the time.

David has a 20 handicap and plays a couple of rounds each week at the Club. "Having had a TIA myself – a transient ischemic attack, which is a low-level stroke – I am an enthusiastic supporter of Bristol After Stroke, as I know the difference it makes to so many local lives."

Money raised by the Captain's Charity was matched by the John James Bristol Foundation and, together, the amount raised from the day is estimated to be over £40,000.

Says Rebecca Sheehy, the charity's Chief Executive: "We are hugely grateful to Alan Thoy who was the Captain of the Bristol and Clifton Golf Club for choosing us as his charity for 2018 and all those who contributed to make this such a successful day. Raising over £40,000 makes a massive difference to our work as every pound we raise goes a very long way. Over the next 20 years, the number of people surviving a stroke is set to rise by a third. We want to ensure that Bristol After Stroke continues to offer the support that is desperately needed and meets the increasing demand."



Staff, Volunteer & Trustee News

We are delighted to welcome new faces to our team!



Lucy Stockall, Volunteer Coordinator, started in September. Funded by Bristol Older People's Alliance (Quartet Community Foundation, St Monica Trust & John James Bristol Foundation) her one-year project is giving a much-needed boost to our volunteer offer, processes and recruitment. We are pleased to report that offers of volunteering help have increased substantially since she started, and she brings with her useful experience of community fundraising from her time at Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Penny Snow is covering Claire Lambourne's maternity leave as Stroke Support Coordinator for South Gloucestershire and is also temporarily supporting our Fishponds and South Bristol Stroke Support Groups. She brings many years of experience most recently at Age UK.



I'm Liz Jackson and I'm really pleased to be the new Volunteer Counsellor for Bristol After Stroke. I'm currently halfway through my training to be an integrative counsellor, at the University of South Wales in Newport. I joined BAS in September and am hoping to see up to two clients per week over the next couple of years. I'm delighted to be part of such a wonderful organisation!

Trustee News

Sadly, we said goodbye this year to John Davies, but not before he completed his marathon challenge!

We welcome Jim Grafton. Jim is a retired marketing executive and came to us originally as a volunteer to help with renewing our marketing strategy and the relaunch last year. He enjoyed his time with us so much he has stayed on as trustee.



Obituary

It is with particular sadness that we let you know that our dear friend Len Osgood passed away in September. Len had been undergoing treatment of cancer and unfortunately did not recover from surgery.

Many of you will have read Len's story and heard him talk movingly about how Bristol After stroke helped him. Len was a particular advocate of our ACTION after Stroke short course. It helped him to acknowledge the hidden, emotional impact of stroke. The course helped him set new goals, and once he retired officially, he volunteered regularly at the Yate Stroke Group and the South Gloucestershire Stroke Café in Downend.

Len was a passionate friend, advocate, volunteer and fundraiser and he touched us all. We will miss him greatly.

Len Osgood, 1951-2018
Bristol After Stroke Volunteer



Ron's Story

A New Year's Resolution to face life after stroke

It took a while for Ron's stroke to become clear – he first felt unwell on a Sunday morning in July 2017. Feeling like someone had pushed him over, he simply fell over while preparing breakfast. He managed to get to a phone and called his partner and son to report a "funny feeling". They took him to an NHS Walk-In Centre but doctors couldn't find anything wrong. He was then taken to Southmead Hospital where, again, nothing appeared wrong apart from an irregular heartbeat. All day the following day and back at work, Ron had a pounding headache. Finally, and in the middle of the night he woke up – he could open his eyes but couldn't get out of bed. His partner called her dad – a former army medic – and he recognised the symptoms straight away: Ron was having a stroke.

Ron spent five weeks in hospital and felt he was discharged with very little preparation for life after stroke. Fortunately, his partner did some research and found a home care service and Bristol After Stroke. After nine months of home care he felt able to manage for himself and to get out and about. He "plucked up the courage to face life on his own". Ron had been an active working man before his stroke. He had a varied career – ranging from welding to French polishing but most recently as a delivery driver. Sadly, he has been unable to return to work – he has some peripheral vision loss and left-sided weakness which mean he can't drive any more. A former pinball wizard – he regrets that his hand-eye coordination is not what it was!

In January last year he made a New Year's Resolution to overcome the challenges left by the stroke. He joined a gym, has started volunteering, and regularly attends Bristol After Stroke's Fishponds Stroke Support Group and the Bristol Stroke Café. Support and counselling from Bristol After Stroke have helped him to accept what he now can and can't do. He views his stroke as another new experience. It has made him feel like a new person – not better or worse just different.



Occupational Therapy students on placement with Bristol After Stroke

We were joined by Kayleigh Owens, in her third year at UWE, for three months in late 2018. She brought a lot of ideas to the Groups with advice, activities and games. Kayleigh says "I really enjoyed my time at Bristol After Stroke and feel very lucky to have met so many lovely people.

"I created a game called 'pick and flip'. This is a memory game where each player had to pick a folded piece of paper with a picture on, out of a bowl and throw a bean bag onto an upside-down picture mat. The mat then was turned over to see if it matched the picture selected. This game aims to facilitate communication, cognitive ability and memory, and motor skills and dexterity to try and remember which pictures were

under each mat, throw accurately, and describe the object and communicate with the rest of the group. This got easier as the game went on. This activity enabled the group to demonstrate good team spirit by working together to find the matching pictures, in a fun and friendly atmosphere."



Become a Friend of Bristol After Stroke and help us to help people live well after stroke

You can become a Friend of Bristol After Stroke for just £15.00 per year, but if you are able to give more:

- £5 a month supports a Stroke Café - informal opportunities for information, advice and support as well as the opportunity to meet others in a similar situation
- £10 a month enables our Stroke Support Coordinators to identify what people need after stroke and practical ways in which we can provide support
- £20 a month enables a stroke affected person or their carer to receive a course of counselling

There are lots of ways you can support us, you can:

- Be a Bristol After Stroke ambassador - please tell your friends and contacts about us, our work and achievements
- Encourage your friends, family and colleagues to support Bristol After Stroke and fundraise for us
- Organise a fundraising event
- Join our fundraising committee
- Volunteer with us

For more information and to download the membership form go to

www.bristolafterstroke.org.uk/pages/59-friends-of-bristol-after-stroke

Keep in touch

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