



# Different Strokes

Reclaiming lives after stroke

# About Different Strokes

## **Our vision:**

To support younger stroke survivors to reclaim their lives

## **Our mission:**

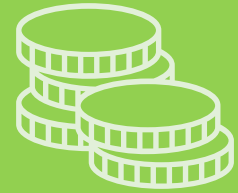
To champion peer support for younger stroke survivors as a means to active recovery

- There are 100,000 strokes in the UK every year
- Stroke is the single biggest cause of disability in the UK
- Stroke causes twice as many deaths in woman than breast cancer.
- Stroke causes twice as many deaths to men than prostate and testicular cancer combined



## Stroke Facts

- **Stroke costs the UK economy £3.5bn per annum in direct health and social care costs**
- **When including the cost of informal care, mortality losses and morbidity losses, this cost rises to £7.5bn per annum**
- **Stroke receives just 20p funding for every £10 which the disease costs the economy**
- **This compares to £1.09 funding per £10 costs for cancer**



## The Cost of Stroke

# What is younger stroke?



- **1 in 4 strokes occur in people aged 65 or younger**
- **Stroke services are not often geared towards people aged under 65**
- **Different Strokes was founded in 1996 by a younger stroke survivor as a direct response to this**

# Potential Effects of a Stroke

## Psychological Edition

Self esteem & confidence issues

Behavioural  
changes

Fear & anxiety

Emotional  
lability

Loss of hope

PTSD

Grief

Depression



Irritability

Guilt & shame

Frustration

Lack of  
motivation

Excessive  
anger

Loneliness

# Potential Effects of a Stroke

## The Physical Edition

Weakness or  
paralysis

Cognitive difficulty

Exhausting neurofatigue

Visual  
Problems



Dysphagia

Bladder or bowel  
changes

Unsteadiness

Spasms

Nerve pain

Speech and  
communication  
problems

Poor co-ordination

Sensation loss

# Potential Effects of a Stroke

## The Social Edition

Having to depend  
on others more

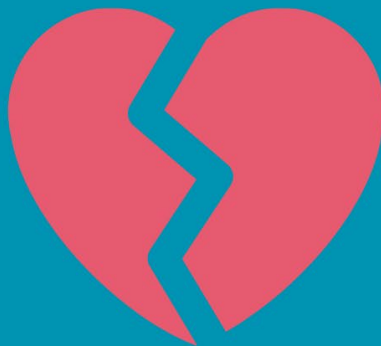
Feeling  
uncomfortable  
socially

Friendship  
Issues

Refraining from taking part in social  
events as to not worsen side effects

Change of roles

Decreased libido



Relationship issues

Changing family  
dynamics

Isolation - feeling  
those around you  
don't understand

Missing out on  
pre-stroke hobbies  
and interests



# Potential Effects of a Stroke

## The Occupational Edition

### Fatigue

Anxiety and apprehension about returning to work

Unable to physically carry out tasks

Trouble managing demands

Transportation issues

Having to re-learn skills



Employer not making reasonable adjustments

Downgraded roles

Being unable to work

Financial Loss

Starting again in a new direction

Reduced Concentration

Employer and colleague apathy

# My Survivor Story



After retiring my husband and I decided it was time to leave where we had lived in Kent for 42 years and look for a house in Norfolk for a quieter more peaceful life. After five months of searching we found our perfect home and we moved in during May 2017. After a 6 week holiday in France we arrived home to begin our new life then on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2017 I had a stroke in my sleep - this is when my life changed forever !

# My Survivor Story

I arrived home in October 2017, having had daily physio for eight weeks. Then, on February 17<sup>th</sup> I got up one morning and I had a seizure. My husband again called 999. This turned out to be a smaller clot that had been hidden by the stroke. Thankfully I was only kept in for a day and after I showed them I could make tea I was released with more meds. It made my husband laugh though and said "She doesn't even make the tea at home, I do it!"

# My Survivor Story

After this I found a personal trainer to work with me at home. His main role was working in care homes. However, our relationship blossomed, and we became good friends. We did inside exercises like steps squats etc., and he helped build up my strength and my confidence so much so that I did a sponsored walk in 2019. He even came to spur me on

# My Survivor Story



and I doubled the distance I had done in 2018. He even finally got me driving and walking outside without my stick. I then found a gym for the disabled, so I explained to Eddie that I felt ready to move on without him. We still remain friends and he was going to walk with me in 2020 when I was going to attempt it without a stick, but sadly COVID-19 meant that walk was cancelled. So, I decided that I would set up my own sponsored walk around my village and have raised £420, which means that in total over three years I am so pleased to have raised £1,800! I am very proud of what I have achieved, although my hand, even though it moves is not functional. In my mind I've come far enough for that to be a small thing now but I do keep trying

# My Survivor Story

In 2018 I decided it was time to lose weight, so I joined a slimming club – and started on the long and arduous road of weight loss. In December 2019 I decided it was time to step up my exercise this was when I found and joined Able2B; a local gym for the disabled, working with Jon Thaxton, the champion boxer. My weight at the end of the year had dropped a stone.

Then 2020 arrived, full of promise, but then of course the COVID-19 pandemic reared its ugly head and obviously my gym had to close. However, they opened up classes on the internet and so I do a 30-minute workout every day, six days a week; plus the Different Strokes Level 4 exercises. I have now actually dropped yet another stone in weight, putting me slimmer and fitter than I was pre-stroke!





# My Survivor Story

I have grown in such confidence that in January 2022 I was appointed as the Regional Coordinator for the Different Strokes Charity covering the East Anglia Region of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex.

I can be contacted on email:

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# My Story Continues

On Monday 28<sup>th</sup>  
February 2022 I  
purchased my own  
foldup Trike so I am back  
on the road again . I  
cycle on a track at the  
University of East Anglia  
Sports park twice a  
month and also on the  
road twice a month  
locally.







# What Does Different Strokes Do?

- Online peer support group – more than 6,000 members
- A network of peer support and exercise groups across the country
- Telephone support line providing practical advice, emotional support and signposting

# What Do Different Strokes Do?



- Online exercise sessions
- Written information packs
- Teen and young adult befriending service
- Online networking sessions
- Family support

# Key Messages

- We think of stroke as only affecting the elderly, but 25,000 people a year of working age have a stroke
- Stroke comes without warning
- Stroke is a life changing event
- Stroke affects the whole family



# Key Messages

- There is no such thing as a 'typical stroke survivor' – everyone is affected differently
- Many of the disabilities experienced post-stroke are hidden disabilities

But...

- **There is life after stroke**
- **Stroke survivors can continue to recover many years after their stroke**

# LEARN THE STROKE WARNING SIGNS



**B**

BALANCE

**LOSS OF  
BALANCE,  
HEADACHE OR  
DIZZINESS**



**E**

EYES

**BLURRED  
VISION**



**F**

FACE

**ONE SIDE OF  
THE FACE IS  
DROOPING**



**A**

ARM

**ARM OR LEG  
WEAKNESS**



**S**

SPEECH

**SLURRED OR  
GARBLED  
SPEECH**



**T**

TIME

**CALL 999  
QUICKLY**

**Don't delay and call 999**



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[www.differentstrokes.co.uk](http://www.differentstrokes.co.uk)



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