

# Make **stroke** the priority it needs to be in Scotland

Rebuilding lives after stroke

**Stroke**  
Association



**“I have never felt so scared.”**

**Brenna Collie (pictured above) from Strichen in Aberdeenshire had a stroke in March 2017, when she was only 14. Brenna was texting a friend, the phone slipped from her hand then she realised she couldn't pick it up again.**

“It happened very quickly. I lost all movement down the left hand side of my body. I couldn't walk. My speech was all slurred so I couldn't call for help. I have never felt so scared.

“It took a lot of hard work and with a lot of support I learned how to walk again. I had to learn how to do things I took for granted, like getting dressed or brushing my teeth. My life is different, there are still things I struggle with, but I wouldn't change anything. I'm now studying to be a Primary School Teacher at QMU in Edinburgh.

“Rehab helped me massively with my recovery. Everyone should have it if they need it. That's why it's so important the Scottish Government presses on with stroke improvements for everyone.”

Stroke is devastating. It destroys lives and families, and comes at huge financial and social cost to all of us. Stroke has not always received the same attention as other serious health conditions. Now's the time to change that.

Emerging evidence of links between Covid-19 and stroke<sup>1</sup> means that now, more than ever, Scotland needs a renewed national focus on stroke.

Currently, too many people do not get best treatment and care.

Encouragingly, work to improve Scotland's stroke services has started but understandably, has been impacted by Covid-19. That progress must continue and gather momentum.

# The Stroke Association in Scotland calls for the next Scottish Government to quickly establish a new, progressive stroke service. One in which all patients receive timely access to evidence-based, stroke specialist treatment, rehabilitation and support.

## 1. Urgently progress and build on the current work to improve stroke services.

- Define and implement a progressive stroke service covering the full pathway, including rehabilitation and long-term support.
- Improve stroke care bundle performance in hospitals.
- Make thrombectomy available for everyone who needs it.
- Increase awareness of the signs of stroke, and stroke prevention.

## 2. Establish a regular reporting mechanism to Parliament, to track progress and ensure transparency and accountability.

The scale of stroke, and the need for urgent and renewed national action requires a Minister to report to 'the people' via Parliament. This doesn't happen at the moment.

A regular reporting mechanism would ensure MSPs can really be involved in overseeing progress on behalf of their constituents, many of whom are stroke survivors and their families.

## 3. Work with people affected by stroke, stroke charities and professionals to understand the impact of stroke on people's lives.

Change cannot reasonably be made without the insight and experience of those who live with the condition.

Work with the voluntary sector and the stroke research community to engage with people - use our expertise in convening patients.

Use the unique data/material our charity and others have – such as our survey on the impact of Covid-19 on stroke survivors.<sup>2</sup>

Make sure patients/carers are 'round the table' when it comes to developing the pathway - ensuring accessibility of language and so on.

## Would you like to find out more?

If you support a new progressive stroke service for Scotland please get in touch.  
Email: [Colin.Oliver@stroke.org.uk](mailto:Colin.Oliver@stroke.org.uk)

## References

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# Stroke facts

2021

128,000

2035

175,000

There are over **128,000 people** in Scotland currently living with the effects of their stroke.<sup>3</sup> It's estimated there will be almost **175,000** by 2035.<sup>4</sup>

**A stroke is a brain attack. It happens when the blood supply to part of your brain is cut off and brain cells are damaged or die.**



**Stroke is a leading cause of severe adult disability.**

Almost two thirds of survivors leave hospital with a disability. Many have problems with speech and communication, thinking and vision.



Around **10,000 people** have a stroke every year in Scotland.<sup>5</sup> Stroke and cerebrovascular disease kills over **3,800**.<sup>6</sup> Many more have to live with the effects.



By 2025 the cost of stroke to Scotland in terms of health and social care will be over **£2.5 billion a year**. By 2035 that rises to over **£4.5 billion a year**.<sup>7</sup>