



Finding **strength** through **support**

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."

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

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	

The **Cornwall Emotional Support Service** has been made possible by **The Elwyn Thomas Memorial Fund**. The **Cornwall Key Worker Service** has been made possible by **an individual donation**.

Digital Inclusion Update January 2025

The rurality of Cornwall poses unique challenges when ensuring everyone has equitable access to the support they need. One way to tackle this is through using digital support. Stroke affects everyone, but is most prevalent in older people, who access technology the least. As part of our Emotional Support Service, we have invested in I.T. equipment to demonstrate to survivors how to access information and guidance to support themselves. Funding from The Elwyn Thomas Memorial Fund has enabled us to provide 4 iPads with communication software for use within Cornwall Emotional Support Service and the Cornwall Key Worker Service. We have also received additional support from Vodafone Charities Connected project in the form of mobile data plans. Having access to a reliable data network in rural areas helps to ensure we can effectively share information and provide digital inclusion support at the bedside, home and in the community. Marnie Dutton-Waters, Stroke Association Support Coordinator had this to say:

“Being able to have access to a tablet has completely changed the way that I communicate with survivors. It allows me to show, rather than tell. Giving people the much-needed visuals to explain their stroke and the things that they can do to aid in their recovery.”

Funding for a further 4 iPads has also been earmarked for NHS Speech and Language Therapy teams to support their work with stroke survivors with additional communication needs. Our teams have received training as Digital Champions and are able to offer support alongside lending laptops and tablets to support stroke survivors get online and access services and resources safely.

Cornwall Emotional Support Service is now a member of The Good Things Foundation National Digital Inclusion Network. In December 2024 we were successful in being accepted as a member of the National Databank. This provides us with the opportunity to supply free data sims to stroke survivors and their carers residing in low-income households. In Cornwall we are also a member of the Digital Lending Scheme. This project is offered by Cornwall Council and provides us with the opportunity to loan laptops and tablets to those most in need.

Since August 2024 We have worked with Cornwall Rural Community Charity's (CRCC) Digital Together Project to provide direct support to independent stroke groups. Digital Outreach workers Jane Morgan and Jay Chapman have been working alongside groups to support members to build confidence in using I.T equipment and to access the internet. Allyson James of Falmouth Stroke Café said

“Jane and Jay have been brilliant! They have been very approachable and supportive in helping members learn how to use their mobiles and tablets. They have fitted in seamlessly with our group and been able to communicate clearly, overcoming member anxieties about digital security and how to get online safely. I wish they could come back every week!”

If you are interested in further information about our Digital Inclusion work for stroke survivors please contact **Simon Eastment** at simon.eastment@stroke.org.uk

Vodafone Charities. Connected: <https://www.vodafone.co.uk/mobile/everyone-connected/charities-connected>

Digital Inclusion Cornwall Council: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/people-and-communities/digital-inclusion/>

CRCC Digital Together: <https://cornwallrcc.org.uk/digital-together>

Good Things Foundation: <https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/network/>