Stroke survivors ‘denied recovery’ says new report

Stroke survivors say they are being denied the chance to make their best recovery because of a lack of post hospital care and poor coordination between health and social care services, according to a new report published today (Tuesday 1 May) by the Stroke Association.

The charity’s report, Struggling to recover, is based on the findings of a survey\(^{(1)}\) of over 2,200 people affected by stroke and paints a bleak picture for many of the one million stroke survivors across the UK.

The report findings reveal that stroke survivors face many barriers in making their best possible recovery:

- 38% of stroke survivors had not received an assessment of their health and social care needs.
- 53% whose stroke occurred in the last three years have received only one assessment.
- Only 38% of those who received an assessment had been given a care plan outlining the services and treatments that would be put in place.

Assessments are the gateway to receiving health and social care services. Without them survivors are missing out on services that are essential to achieving their best possible recovery. The National Stroke Strategy states that people should receive an assessment at six weeks of leaving hospital, again at six months and then annually.

The report also reveals that:
Almost a half (48%) of those receiving services said that health and social care services did not work well together – forcing families and carers to take on the responsibility for coordinating care.

One fifth (18%) reported services being withdrawn even though their needs had stayed the same or had increased.

Jon Barrick, chief executive at the Stroke Association said: “More people than ever are surviving a stroke and that’s a welcome improvement. But many stroke survivors tell us that after all the effort to save their lives they then feel abandoned when they return home. The NHS and local authorities are failing in their responsibilities to provide appropriate and timely support to stroke survivors and their families; and the growing evidence of cuts for people currently getting services is very worrying.”

The Stroke Association is calling for:

- The NHS and local authorities to follow national policy and ensure all stroke survivors have their health and social care needs assessed and regularly reviewed in order to prevent crisis admissions to care homes and hospitals.
- Improved coordination of health and social care services so that stroke survivors and carers can better manage their life after stroke.
- Better training for all those professionals working in social care who come into contact with stroke survivors to better understand stroke and its impact.

Jon Barrick continued: “Common sense aside, the evidence is clear. Appropriate assessment and provision of services at the right time improves quality of life for stroke survivors and their families. It also saves the tax payer money, as people are less likely to require acute or crisis interventions. Stroke survivors and their families must be properly supported immediately after leaving hospital and in the long term, so they can make better recoveries and get on with their lives.”
The report marks the start of the UK’s first Action on Stroke Month, to turn the spotlight on stroke and highlight the recoveries that stroke survivors can make with the right support and services being available. To find out more, please visit www.stroke.org.uk/strokemonth.

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For interviews, photographs or more information, please contact the media team on 020 7566 1500 or email press@stroke.org.uk

Notes to editor


- A stroke is a brain attack which happens when the blood supply to the brain is cut off, caused by a clot or bleeding in the brain. Around 150,000 people have a stroke in the UK every year and it is the leading cause of severe adult disability. There are over one million people in UK living with the effects of stroke.
- The Stroke Association is a charity. We believe in life after stroke and we’re leading a community of people to change the world for people affected by stroke. We work directly with stroke survivors and their families and carers, with health and social care professionals and with scientists and researchers. We campaign to improve stroke care and support people to make the best recovery they can. We fund research to develop new treatments and ways of preventing stroke. The Stroke Helpline (0303 303 3100) provides information and support on stroke. More information can be found at www.stroke.org.uk

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