



**"DON'T LET LIMITS
DEFINE YOUR LIFE."
ANTHONY SHARES
HIS STORY**

**PLUS:
COMMUNITY
EVENTS, ASK
THE EXPERT,
AND MUCH
MORE!**



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GET IN TOUCH

If you would like to share your thoughts, questions or story drop us an email at info@differentstrokes.co.uk



BoltBurdonKemp

Our thanks to **Bolt Burdon Kemp** for sponsoring this newsletter.

An audio version of this newsletter will be available soon on our website.



30 YEARS OF DIFFERENT STROKES

A very warm welcome to our Spring 2026 newsletter.

This year, we turn 30! At this time it's important to reflect on what we have achieved over the past 30 years, and to pay tribute to everyone who has helped us on this journey – our founder Donal O'Kelly, the thousands of stroke survivors who have shared their stories and supported each other, our staff, volunteers and trustees, and countless individuals who have supported us in so many ways, such as through fundraising, giving up their time or helping to promote our charity.

Having said that, our ethos as a charity is to look forward, not back. We continually strive to do more and to support stroke survivors in new and meaningful ways. This year we are introducing monthly Community Events, which you can read about on page 12. We have also been updating our information packs, working closely with our community to ensure they truly reflect what stroke survivors and their families need and want. Lily, who is leading this work, shares an update in this edition.



As always, the most important part of this newsletter – and indeed of our work in general – is elevating the voices of stroke survivors and ensuring their stories are heard. In this edition we feature stories from survivors Anthony, Katy, William and Ian. Supporting remarkable individuals like these and providing a platform for them to encourage and inspire others affected by stroke is fundamental to what we do. It is something that will remain central to Different Strokes as we look ahead to the next 30 years.

As always, thank you for your support and enjoy the newsletter.

Austin

Volunteer Spotlight: Meet Ian

Ian joined Different Strokes after his own stroke and now volunteers online. He helps run virtual meetings, giving stroke survivors a place to connect, share and feel supported.

“In 2019 at the age of 57 I had a non-aneurysmal subarachnoid haemorrhage. I was working from home as an IT software developer when I suddenly experienced what felt like the headache from hell. I lay on the bed and managed to phone my wife Lyn, who immediately realised I was having a stroke and called an ambulance.

I was home alone and our neighbour had to smash the glass in the front door so that help could get in. At that point I didn't think I was going to survive and prepared myself for the worst.

When the paramedics arrived, they thought I was having a panic attack. I was taken to Darlington Memorial Hospital and left sitting in A&E for several hours. Lyn pushed for a CT scan which revealed a significant bleed on the brain.



Suddenly I was a priority. I was blue-lighted to the Royal Victoria Infirmary where I spent eight days before returning home. The blood was clearing from my brain and at the time I wasn't aware of any lasting effects from the stroke.

Six weeks later I started to understand how the stroke had affected me. From a medical point of view everything looked fine, but nobody understood the psychological and cognitive issues I was experiencing. There were no next steps and no support offered to me.

As many stroke survivors know, once you leave hospital you can feel completely lost about what to do next. I knew I would find answers on the internet and subsequently found the Different Strokes Facebook Group. The problem was that I had developed an adverse reaction to computer and TV screens. Whenever I looked at a screen my brain just seemed to say 'no, no, no'.

Over time this improved and I can now use screens again, but initially my wife had to manage everything online for me.

Post-stroke, I struggle with fatigue and cognitively I don't always process things the way I used to. This led to early retirement on medical grounds as I could no longer write software or be responsible for business-critical servers.

When Different Strokes started virtual meetings during Covid, I thought it was a brilliant idea. A safe space to connect with other stroke survivors without the need to travel.

I joined the calls regularly and every two weeks I met people who had the same issues and similar stories to tell.

Occasionally Sheelagh would ask if I could help facilitate a breakout room during the meeting. Over time this became a regular request and I applied to become an official Different Strokes volunteer.

Being part of the virtual meetings means I get to meet people just like me. Everyone has a story to share and I find it fascinating listening to them. There are tears but there is also plenty of laughter and it really helps reduce isolation.

When someone joins for the first time feeling lost and alone, you can often see the moment they realise they are not alone. There are other people who understand exactly what they are going through. As a volunteer I now offer the support I was so grateful to receive when I first joined the virtual meetings."

Come and meet Ian and others at our twice-monthly virtual meetings. A welcoming space for stroke survivors to connect and share.



CARRYING FORWARD A POWERFUL LEGACY

10 years ago, the Different Strokes Tipton Group in the West Midlands was founded by stroke survivor Ileen Grant.

Ileen was focused on reclaiming her life after stroke and wanted to inspire and encourage other younger stroke survivors to do the same.

Paula Beddow was working as an Asda Community Champion at the time and offered to support the group, including providing tea and coffee for meetings.

Paula attended the very first meeting to help out and soon became the tea lady. As Paula puts it 'I was a bit of a nuisance and just kept on turning up every month'.

Sadly, Ileen passed away in 2018, but her legacy continues through the group she founded. The Tipton Group still meets every month and is now led by Paula, supporting younger stroke survivors through regular meetings and activities such as arts and crafts and guest speakers.



Paula has developed a strong relationship with Ingrid, who runs the Birmingham & Sandwell Group. The two groups regularly connect and members support local hospital visits. When we held our Manchester Conference last year, they even organised a minibus so they could travel together.

Ileen once described Paula as 'a fantastic support to our group right from day one' and as someone who 'really helped our group to flourish - team work makes the dream work'. **As the group approaches its 10th anniversary, the support and encouragement Ileen hoped to create continues to thrive.**

NEW GROUPS IN JARROW & DERBY

Two new volunteer led support groups have opened!

Different Strokes Jarrow in Tyne and Wear held its first meeting in February. The group is led by Karen Woolerton, who wanted to offer a safe and welcoming place for stroke survivors to meet. It is very much a family affair as Karen, her husband Mark and daughter Karlyn all involved in running the group.

Karen decided she wanted to start the group after her daughter Karlyn had a stroke in 2020 at the age of 37. After their first meeting Karen said "I have not seen Karlyn engage so happily with new people since her stroke".

The Different Strokes Jarrow Group meets on the 3rd Saturday of the month, 10.00 am to 11.30 am, at Bilton Hall Community Centre, Taunton Avenue, Jarrow NE32 3RT

FIND OUT MORE:



[Different Strokes Jarrow](#)



jarrow@differentstrokes.co.uk

Different Strokes Derby held its first meeting in March and is led by Maggie Doar, who had a haemorrhagic stroke at the height of the Covid pandemic in December 2020.

Having spent months in hospital at a time where visitors weren't allowed, Maggie truly understands how isolating stroke can be. Maggie's vision for the group is to create a place where stroke survivors can share their experiences and feel less alone.

The Different Strokes Derby Group meets on the last Friday of the month, 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm, at Sandiacre Methodist Church, Butt Street, Sandiacre NG10 5JG.

FIND OUT MORE:



[Different Strokes Derby](#)



derby@differentstrokes.co.uk

FREE ONLINE STROKE EXERCISE VIDEOS

Recovering from a stroke can be challenging, and access to ongoing rehabilitation is not always available. **That's why we've created a library of 100+ free, stroke-specific exercise videos on our YouTube channel**, designed to support stroke survivors at every stage of recovery.



Our online exercise videos are:

- ✓ **Expert-led and survivor-informed**
- ✓ **For all abilities** - seated to advanced
- ✓ **Available anytime** on YouTube



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Summer Joins the Team

Last November we welcomed Summer to our staff team as our new Community Administrator.

Summer's role is to provide dedicated administrative support to our incredible volunteer-led groups across the UK. She has settled in very well, forming strong relationships with our groups, and brings valuable experience and enthusiasm to our team.

Outside of work, she volunteers for a mental health helpline, enjoys reading fiction and playing video games, and is currently completing a counselling qualification — further reflecting her commitment to supporting others and understanding lived experience.

Summer commented *"My background is in supporting volunteers in all kinds of places and with people from all walks of life. I care deeply for the charity sector and the real impact we have. While I haven't had a stroke myself, I am disabled and so I empathise*



with the experiences of anyone whose condition profoundly affects their life. Support groups are essential for many of us and I'm looking forward to being a part of this. I have massive respect for what our volunteers do, and this will be at the heart of what I do at Different Strokes."

Introducing Summer means that our previous Groups Co-ordinator, Caroline, is now able to focus more on Outreach, which has been our aspiration for some time. Caroline will still be overseeing our network of groups, but will now be focusing more on supporting our great team of volunteer ambassadors, and running our new community events.

NEW INFORMATION BOOKLETS LAUNCH

We are delighted to share that the first seven titles in our newly redesigned information booklet series are now complete and ready to order.

Created to support stroke survivors at every stage of recovery, these booklets are for those adjusting in the early weeks, rebuilding confidence months later, or navigating longer-term changes years on.

Originally planned as a simple update to our existing materials, the project quickly evolved. Through focus groups and conversations with our community, it became clear that a light refresh would not go far enough. You told us you wanted resources that truly reflect the realities of stroke recovery, are honest about its complexity and are grounded in lived experience. What began as a revision became a full redesign.



Each booklet is designed to present information in clear, manageable sections that are easy to follow. Alongside essential medical guidance, you will find the voices of other stroke survivors throughout, sharing insight, reassurance and real-life experience.

Every booklet begins with a short personal letter from someone who has been through it themselves, offering a reminder that you are not alone and that others understand what you may be going through.

These resources have been carefully developed through research, focus groups and conversations with stroke survivors, alongside reviews from clinical and subject specialists. We are deeply grateful to everyone who shared their experiences and expertise to help shape these booklets.

The booklets are available in multiple formats. Printed copies can be ordered free of charge by survivors and their families. Downloadable PDFs and individual booklet webpages are available for those who find it easier to read online or use accessibility tools to read.

This project was made possible thanks to funding from
The National Lottery Community Fund.



The next phase of the project will focus on specialist booklets covering topics that have a significant impact on stroke survivors, including Work After Stroke, Parenting After Stroke, and Sex and Relationships After Stroke. These booklets will follow the same survivor-centred approach and are planned to be developed and completed throughout 2026.

If you would like to help shape these future guides, please contact our Information Officer, Lily, via info@differentstroke.co.uk

The new core booklets are:

- What is a Stroke?
- Stroke Recovery: From Hospital to Home
- What Caused My Stroke?
- The Physical Impact of Stroke
- The Invisible Side of Stroke
- Living with Fatigue
- Getting the Care You Need

To view, download or order your copies, simply scan the QR code



NEW FOR 2026: COMMUNITY EVENTS

Throughout 2026, we are holding a series of community events for stroke survivors across the UK.

Following feedback from our 2025 survey, in which many respondents expressed a desire for more face-to-face contact, we are planning monthly get-togethers. These half-day meetings will give stroke survivors the chance to meet others, take part in activities and share their experiences in a supportive environment.

We have already held two successful events. Our first event in February took place in Nottingham. Caroline, our Outreach Manager, hosted the event and our thanks go to Sophie, Andrew, Rosie and Maxine from Irwin Mitchell, who arranged the venue and provided support on the day, as well as being on hand for legal guidance. We are also very grateful to the Light Fund for supporting these events.

ROB LEADS THE EXERCISE SESSION IN NOTTINGHAM



After a warm welcome from Caroline, we introduced Maggie, who has just launched the Different Strokes Derby Peer Support Group.

Following this, Jak, a stroke survivor and Different Strokes Ambassador, shared his story with attendees. He spoke openly about how stroke has affected his identity and described his approach to recovery, summed up in his mantra, “oh go on then”, when trying something new.

Attendees had the chance to join a seated exercise session led by Rob Ghahremani from movmfitness.co.uk. Rob is a qualified Personal Trainer specialising in working with disabled clients. As a wheelchair user, he brought both lived

experience and professional expertise, delivering a fully inclusive and accessible session. The session was full of energy and big smiles. Rob led a fantastic class that added a lot of fun to the day.

Our March event took place in Manchester, where our speaker was Dan, who had a stroke aged 31 and is a single father to a young daughter. He spoke honestly about the difficult times in his recovery and his determination to keep working on his rehabilitation.

Our next events are:



- **Cardiff** - Fri. 24th April
- **Newcastle** - Mon. 18th May
- **London** - Fri. 19th June

These early events have been a powerful reminder of the important role peer support plays in recovery. It was inspiring to see people connecting, sharing openly, and supporting each other. We look forward to building on this momentum and welcoming more stroke survivors to our Community Events across the country throughout 2026.

Attendance at these events is completely free but is only open to stroke survivors (and their partners or carers). Booking is essential as places are limited.

**SCAN TO FIND
OUT MORE**



"These sort of meetings are essential for people who are at whatever stage of their stroke journey. Especially the mental health side of it. The support helps more than ever. I am very grateful to have been invited to be a part of the first meeting."

Nottingham Event Attendee

Looking to become more independent and confident by reducing falls and trips and making walking less of an effort while living with the effects of a stroke?

84% of FES users report a reduction in the incidence of falls after using FES.*

*OML FES user survey 2025



Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) restores and improves movement to assist with walking, grasping and shoulder function leading to improvements in daily living activities, quality of life and reduced pain.

FES is a treatment which involves applying small electrical pulses to the nerve, activating the muscle which has become weakened due to a neurological condition.

Odstock Medical Ltd (OML) is the leading provider of FES treatment and equipment to the NHS.

FES is a recommended treatment in the National Guidelines for Stroke by the Royal College of Physicians

What our FES users say...

“ It (FES) enables me to walk. Without it, I suffer from the textbook dropped foot. It improves my balance immensely and I can walk safely both upstairs and across uneven ground. ”

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This year we turn 30, and we're marking the milestone with a **special daytime event** and **evening celebration** in **Daventry** on **Saturday 18th July**.



Daytime: Talks, group sessions, info stands, and time to connect with other stroke survivors.



Evening: Three-course meal, music, entertainment, & reflections on thirty years.



Tickets: Available for **daytime, evening, or both**.

A huge thank you to **Irwin Mitchell & Slater and Gordon** for sponsoring this special event.



Tickets on sale on our website now 

ANTHONY'S STORY

"Don't focus on what you can't do, focus on what you can do."

Words that changed my life

"I was your average sparky child; I loved playing football, running around, and being super active. But when I was six, I started getting severe headaches. I'd be curled up on the sofa, holding my head in my hands. Doctors thought it was migraines at first, but my mum kept taking me back until they ran a brain scan and found a tumour the size of a golf ball.

They said I needed an urgent operation. During the operation, I suffered a stroke, which led to left-sided hemiplegia. The doctors told my parents I'd never run or be very active again.

I spent the next year wheelchair-bound and bed-bound – off school for a year, with physio, injections, and endless blood tests.

When I went back to school, I wasn't allowed out to play with

the other kids. Staff were worried I might fall and bump my head, so I had to sit indoors doing physio exercises, looking out the window at my friends running around.

I hated being disabled. I was the only student at the school with a disability. I was ashamed and embarrassed. I used to wear a big coat to cover my arm and sit at the back of the class where no one could see me. I hated doing my physio and hated myself. I used to wish I'd never survived the operation, thinking, *"Why am I still here?"*

**ANT WAS JUST SIX
WHEN HE HAD A STROKE**

MEETING BAZ

At that time, there wasn't much out there for fitness for young stroke survivors, but my mum found Different Strokes. It had only started recently and ran fitness classes for young stroke survivors. The instructor was this massive guy called Baz. Baz was a bodybuilder who'd had a stroke in his twenties. He was awesome!

To know that this massive muscly guy was a stroke survivor like me changed everything. I wanted muscles like him – I'd found a role model! Even though I was the only kid in the class, I stuck with it. I went every week and listened to Baz.

He used to say stuff like, *"No pain, no gain!"* and *"When you feel the burn... that's when you're building new strength."* Until I met Baz, I had no one to look up to. After I met him, whenever I needed encouragement, my mum would say, "Be like Baz."

Baz taught the classes until I was about ten. After Baz stopped teaching, I stopped going, but the fire for fitness he lit stayed with me. Baz literally changed my life.

FULL CIRCLE MOMENT

Twenty years later, guess where I was? Back at the YMCA in Central London, TEACHING fitness classes to stroke survivors with Different Strokes!

Training with Baz also inspired me to pursue a career as a personal trainer. My mum told me I should be the Baz for young people – to be the role model he was when I needed one as a child.



After ten years, I got my chance at a gym, covering for another instructor who was off sick. I was working at reception at the time. When I ran the first class, twenty out of thirty people left when they saw I was disabled – that spurred me on to give the ten that stayed the best class they'd ever had. I went for it, high energy - really cranked it up. At the end, people said, *"That was incredible, I'm coming back next week!"* - and they did! Word spread, and pretty soon my classes were fully booked. I haven't looked back since.

TAKING THINGS ONLINE

When Covid hit and gyms closed, I saw Joe Wicks inspiring kids, but nothing for people with disabilities. So I started doing seated chair exercises live on YouTube every day, with 2,000 people tuning in each morning.

Different Strokes got in touch and asked me to do videos for them. Since then, we've produced three series together – starting with rough live sessions, then 30-minute exercises, and now Rehab Reset, short workouts focusing on key areas.

THE MARATHON RECORD

In 2024, I set myself a huge challenge – run the London Marathon and break the Guinness World Record for the fastest marathon by someone paralysed down one side. Training was tough; my right side did most of the work, causing cramps and fatigue. On race day, the miles were painful, and there were moments I could have stopped, but I kept going. Crossing the finish line in 5 hours 49 minutes, I had done it – broken the world record. It was emotional and unforgettable.



**ANTHONY BREAKING RECORDS
& STIGMAS**

SHARING WHAT I'VE LEARNED

My aim now is to share what I've learned to inspire other stroke survivors and people with disabilities. I run six seated exercise classes a week at a gym, in the middle of the gym so everyone can see. I also give talks in schools, inspiring young people to be the best version of themselves.

I tell them what my football coach said at 16: *"Don't focus on what you can't do, focus on what you can do."* He helped me recognise that although I couldn't use one side, I had to develop a super strong right side. I've learnt to work with what I've got, focus on small improvements, do what I can each day, and value the strength I've developed because of my stroke.

A stroke is life-changing! But it doesn't mean the end of your life. It's a new way of living. You can still live an incredible life – just in a different way.



**HEAD OVER TO OUR
YOUTUBE CHANNEL FOR
ANTHONY'S CLASSES AND
BAZ REUNION**

REUNITED WITH BAZ

In September last year, Different Strokes invited me to speak at their event in Milton Keynes. After my speech, Jennie Gow, a fellow stroke survivor and presenter, surprised me. Different Strokes had contacted The One Show and tracked down Baz so we could be reunited for the first time in over 25 years. It was an amazing, emotional day – I was completely shocked!

Since then, we've met several times. My mum was thrilled to see him again. We went for Christmas drinks, and Baz loved hearing about my competitions. He even came to support me at my Hyrox event in London and will be cheering me on at upcoming events – it's meant the world."



ASK THE EXPERT

HOW DO YOU NAVIGATE TRYING TO GET BACK TO A SOCIAL LIFE WITH NEW PHYSICAL, COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL LIMITS?



ANSWERED BY: DR GILES YEATES,
CONSULTANT CLINICAL
NEUROPSYCHOLOGIST
RIPPLING MINDS &
OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

Getting back to a social life can be one of the hardest journeys following a stroke. On the one hand, our mental health and wellbeing can benefit from a secure and satisfying social life. On the other hand, other people can be the most unpredictable aspects of life (at any point, and especially following stroke), leading to confusion, distress and sometimes isolation.

Communication is key – orientating others in your life about your needs, preferences and requirements to allow you to feel comfortable when with other people. This could include locations that have sufficient access, environments that are the optimal level of stimulation for

you (noise, lighting, business) and duration of any meet-up (to manage fatigue). People who do not have personal experience of stroke may not be thinking about any of these issues, so will need to be led by you so you both have a pleasurable time together.

Finding the right fit between you and others can be the real journey – maybe the people and the places where you met up with others before your stroke may no longer be the best for you now. Shifting from the old rule book about people and places to forging a new one can be challenging, take time, and may include lots of disappointing, frustrating and sometimes distressing experiences along the way.

You may feel let down by friends who were in your life before the stroke and are no longer around for you. New, unexpected people may now come into your life who are a better fit for you now. Qualities in others such as flexibility, compassion and patience become important.

The process of social interaction itself can be directly impacted by the stroke. Communication (expressing yourself and understanding others) can be restricted and/or confusing. 'Stepping in the shoes' of others' minds and feelings can become more difficult, which can lead to being 'out of sync' with others.

Social anxiety can be a common experience for many – worrying about what others think of you, that they will judge you, not understand you. Forgetting names and other socially-important information can be stressful. Many stroke survivors can feel lonely, even (and sometimes especially) when surrounded by others who do not understand your perspective.

Finding your way to a social opportunity may need thinking outside of the box. Sometimes a hobby, activity or sport group can be a good way to meet people, letting the activity bring you into connection with others. Meeting others online and through social media may be preferable for some (who may struggle with mobility restrictions, and who may like greater control in the duration of interactions with others). Online contact may create more problems for other stroke survivors however, who would prefer face to face contact.

In summary, there is no one path to meaningful interactions with others after stroke – I suggest throwing out the old rule book, start writing a new one, step by step, and find your people (who may have been waiting to enter your life at precisely this moment).



KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Stroke Prevention Awareness Survey

We want to understand what stroke survivors know about preventing another stroke. Your answers will help us improve patient education across the NHS. **This survey takes just 3 minutes.**

THE SURVEY COVERS:

● Lifestyle & Diet

● Smoking & Alcohol

● Blood Sugar (HbA1c)

● Atrial Fibrillation

● Physical Activity

● Blood Pressure Target

● Cholesterol (LDL)

SCAN THE QR CODE TO TAKE PART



A partnership between Different Strokes and NHS stroke prevention services
This survey is supported by a general research grant from Medtronic

DIFFERENT STROKES EXPANDS LEGAL SUPPORT OFFER FOR STROKE SURVIVORS

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IM irwinmitchell



fletchers
solicitors

**+ Slater
Gordon**
Lawyers

We're delighted to announce the launch of a new corporate membership scheme. This builds on our long-standing relationships with **Irwin Mitchell**, **Bolt Burdon Kemp** and most recently **Fletchers**, by expanding our legal support offer by bringing onboard **Slater and Gordon** to strengthen the support available to stroke survivors within our community.

The impact of a stroke can raise complex questions, from medical treatment and rehabilitation to employment, finances, housing and long-term care. Legal needs can vary widely, and no single firm can be the right fit for every situation.

By formalising our approach and working with a small group of carefully selected specialist firms, our community will benefit from:

- ✓ **Clear, accessible legal information**
- ✓ Easy access to trusted specialist legal firms
- ✓ **A simple guide to legal support**
- ✓ Sponsorship of our newsletters and conference
- ✓ **Free webinars and legal clinics**
- ✓ More training and educational support for our staff and volunteers

FIND OUT MORE



WHEN STROKE CARE FAILS



Ipek Tugcu of Bolt Burdon Kemp shares the common causes and consequences of medical negligence.

A stroke is life-changing and can raise painful questions about whether things could have been done differently. If a stroke could have been prevented, or its effects reduced, with proper treatment, this may be medical negligence.

Medical negligence is not just any mistake. It occurs when care falls below a legally acceptable standard and causes an avoidable injury.

Some common patterns we see in stroke cases include:

Negligence causing a stroke

Several of our clients' strokes were negligently caused by the very treatment intended to help them. For example:

- Inadequate anticoagulation (blood-thinning medication), especially after surgery or childbirth
- Procedural errors, such as introducing air into the bloodstream (air embolism) causing a stroke
- Failures leading to hypoxia (lack of oxygen), resulting in a stroke

Ignoring risk factors

There are some conditions, such as atrial fibrillation, cholesterol or diabetes, which increase the chance of stroke. Doctors should identify and manage these risks.

High blood pressure is the single biggest risk factor for stroke. Improperly monitoring, acting upon readings and managing medication for hypertension may signal negligence in failing to prevent a stroke.



Failure to act upon a TIA ('mini-stroke')

A TIA is a warning sign of a stroke and nearly 20% of TIA patients have a stroke within 90 days. Some clients whose doctors dismissed their TIA later suffered a major stroke. Evidence showed that proper treatment at the time could have prevented it.

Negligent management of a TIA can include:

- Saying a patient is “too young” to have a stroke
- Failing to make an urgent specialist referral
- Not carrying out essential tests
- Failing to treat the TIA with antiplatelets, anticoagulation or surgery

Failure to treat a stroke

Sometimes, a stroke cannot be avoided but negligent treatment makes the outcome catastrophic.

Timing is crucial, with treatment often only effective within certain time windows. The opportunity to receive life-changing treatment can be lost with negligent delays.

Looking back can be important

It's important to seek legal advice on concerns about the care you or a loved one received. You have nothing to lose, and it could be life changing.

Making a claim is not just about compensation. For many, it is about answers, accountability and securing the lifelong support, therapies and financial security needed for the injuries and losses sustained.

These cases are complex, so having a specialist medical negligence, ideally brain injury, solicitor is crucial. There are strict time limits—usually three years from the stroke or from when you first realised something went wrong—though exceptions exist for survivors lacking mental capacity.

Approaching solicitors can feel daunting, but we are here to help. We offer a free initial conversation and handle cases on a “no win no fee” basis.

GET IN TOUCH WITH IPEK TODAY



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ipektugcu@bbkllp.co.uk

MEET THE FUNDRAISER: KATY

At Different Strokes, every story of recovery is important. Katy's journey shows how resilience and support can turn personal challenges into hope for others.

“ The 1st July 2025 changed the path of my life, but I am determined to grow with those changes.

I now believe that I had a dissection in my neck for 7–10 days before my stroke presented. I had horrendous neck pain that I put down to a migraine, the time of the month and a chaotic week of work and family life.

On the morning of the stroke I felt intense pins and needles in my right hand and quickly realised something wasn't right. Within hours I was in hospital being treated for a suspected stroke. I was lucky that I arrived just in time to receive emergency treatment. Even so, the impact was huge. I lost the use of my right side and suddenly found myself facing a future I hadn't planned.



In hospital I was overwhelmed with guilt. I kept wondering if I had caused this somehow and worried about how it would affect my family. I didn't want to be a burden on anyone. I also felt an unbelievable sense of loss – I had so many exciting things planned, including spending the summer as a family in Spain, and I thought all of that had gone.

Recovery has been slow and often emotional. In the early days, just sitting up or standing felt impossible. Physiotherapy became my focus. I remember the day I had to prove I could manage the stairs in order to go home. I cried as fear took over, but I did it. We practised those two flights of stairs five times.

Coming home was one of the most special moments of my life. We didn't tell my son, who was eight at the time, that I was being discharged. When he walked in from school and saw me sitting in the living room, his reaction was unforgettable. That little man is the reason I get up every day and keep going.

I'm now nearly nine months since my stroke and I'm learning that slow and steady really does win the race. You have to acknowledge the small wins. Recently I managed to wear heels for six hours and navigate two trains and three tube journeys with a suitcase. In December I was still crying at the thought of travelling alone. I still have weakness on my right side, but nothing like before.

In January I set myself a challenge to complete a 5K walk to raise funds for Different Strokes. Before 1st July, I would never have imagined doing something like that.

The challenge was about more than recovery. It was about giving hope to others and supporting a charity that helps younger stroke survivors like me. Crossing the finish line with friends and family beside me was completely overwhelming, but I was incredibly proud.

My goals today look very different to the ones I had in hospital. I'm now aiming to build up to a 10K – maybe even a half marathon – all walked, one step at a time. Helping others who are facing stroke is now at the top of that list.



INSPIRED?



FIND YOUR
CHALLENGE



KATY & HER FAMILY
CELEBRATE AT
THE FINISH LINE



FULL CIRCLE GIVING

WILLIAM SUFFERED A
STROKE IN 2010 AGED 64

We look forward to supporting William Duperouzel and the Chiltern Catenian Circle Association from April 2026 as Different Strokes becomes their charity of the year.

The Catenian Association is a global network of Catholic men who meet to strengthen family life through friendship and faith. Local circles organise events, social activities and fundraising for local causes. The Chiltern Catenian Circle has supported communities for many years and is proud to nominate a charity each year during the President's term.

William has been a member since 2008. He has played many roles in the association and will serve as President from April 2026.

“ I didn't realise what was happening to me at first. I knew first aid, but I was confused: my arm would not move properly, my voice sounded odd, and my breathing felt strange. A colleague recognised the symptoms and did the FAST test. I was taken to hospital and treated quickly with clot-busting therapy. I count myself very fortunate.

The weeks and months that followed were hard and uncertain. I worked on my speech and my strength every day. I learned a new normal and slowly returned to the things I loved - volunteering, writing, and being part of my local community. That recovery would not have felt possible without the people and organisations who helped me along the way.

Now, as I take on the role of President of the Chiltern Catenian Circle this year, I've chosen Different Strokes to be our charity of the year. I want to give something back to the service that helped me find my feet after stroke. ”

Many of William's Catenian colleagues may not have known he is a stroke survivor. He would like to open a conversation about stroke, how it can happen at any age, what recovery can look like and how simple support can change lives.

When William had his stroke, Different Strokes helped him find information and answered his questions. He wants others to know about this support - both for survivors and for families. Becoming President gives William a chance to use his role to help others.



If you'd like to find out more:

Email:

ContactUs@thecatenians.com

Visit:

www.thecatenians.uk

www.duperouzel.org



[@ChilternCatenians](https://www.facebook.com/ChilternCatenians)

COULD WE BE YOUR CHARITY OF THE YEAR?



If you work for, or are part of, an organisation that supports charities, **please consider nominating Different Strokes as your Charity of the Year.**

These partnerships help raise awareness of stroke in younger people and generate vital funds to support our services. **Together we can reach more stroke survivors and ensure no one faces recovery alone.**

To find out more about partnering with us, please contact info@differentstrokes.co.uk

The
nation's
first fully
accessible
family fun
day out!

PARALLEL WINDSOR

5TH JULY 2026

Windsor Great Park



**FIND OUT
MORE**



Flexible fundraising challenges –

walk, run, or roll (10K, 5K, 1K & 100m) at your own pace



Festival atmosphere

live music, dance, comedy, and interactive experiences



Bursting with inclusive experiences & entertainment –

designed for all abilities to enjoy and explore



Fun for the whole family

from crafts and climbing to street food and quiet spaces



Unique experiences –

including Animal Kingdom and hands-on activities

Fundraise for Different Strokes for your free place

Bring family for just **£9.50**, carers **£5.00**

All activities included in price!

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY - JULY 2026

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

- Wednesday 6th May
- Tuesday 19th May
- Wednesday 3rd June
- Tuesday 16th June
- Monday 29th June
- Tuesday 14th July
- Wednesday 29th July

VIRTUAL MEETINGS FOR CARERS

- Monday 11th May
- Wednesday 10th June
- Wednesday 8th July

WEBINARS

- Friday 15th May
Menopause
- June, date TBC
Caring for a
stroke survivor

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Monday 18th May
Newcastle
- Friday 19th June
London
- July, date TBC
Nottingham

30TH YEAR EVENT & CELEBRATION

- Saturday 18th July
Daventry



JOIN THE

30 FOR 30

CHALLENGE



Your Challenge. Your Way.



**Together, we can make sure no
younger survivor faces recovery alone**

KEEP IN TOUCH

We love to hear from you!



0345 130 7172



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 **Different
Strokes**
Reclaiming lives after stroke

