

April 2025 Update – Cornwall Services

It is officially Spring and we hope that you have been able to enjoy some time in the sunshine!

News from the Cornwall Emotional Support Service

European Life After Stroke Forum

The success of the Cornwall Emotional Support Service in achieving a significant improvement in depression and anxiety levels for stroke survivors supported, was showcased at a major stroke event in Prague in March. The **European Life After Stroke Forum** brings together and shares research, best practice and the experience of stroke survivors from across Europe.

Fern McClusky, the Cornwall Emotional Support Service Manager created a poster outlining why the service was so needed by stroke survivors in Cornwall and how they had been helped since the service launched in April 2022. Cornwall has the highest prevalence of stroke in the country, in part due to its rural nature and lack of resources. Many stroke survivors find themselves unable to leave their homes after a stroke. **Home visits are prioritised** by the service and in 2023/24, **505 home visits** were made to those who would not otherwise have been able to access the service because of the life-altering effects of stroke.



Fern's poster was "**highly commended**" and here she is with the poster displaying its purple rosette.

It's great to see the amazing work of the Cornwall Emotional Support Service team being recognised at international level and it was a brilliant way to celebrate the service's **third birthday**!

What difference has the Cornwall Emotional Support Service made?

April 1st marks the **third birthday** for the Cornwall Emotional Support Service. Since the service began in 2022, **738 referrals for counselling support** for local stroke survivors and their family members or carers have been made.

In 2024/25 the referral rate has increased by 12% with 300 referrals made. The majority of the referrals have been made by NHS colleagues working in the **Integrated Community Stroke Service (ICSS)**. The **key emotional support needs** identified at the point of referral have included: **emotionalism, communication, social interaction, fatigue and independence.**

It is clear that as the Cornwall Emotional Support Service moves into its fourth year of delivery that counselling it is a much needed support service for local stroke survivors, their families and their carers.

Feedback received from those accessing the Cornwall Emotional Support Service between January and March 2025

"The counselling has really helped me to explore feelings that I wasn't allowing myself to feel before. It's allowing me space to process. I am now allowing myself to let go of certain things and to begin the process of accepting the change in my life"

Feedback from a stroke survivor

"I always feel a bit more me when I've seen you."

Feedback from a stroke survivor

"It has been good talking today, thank you. I wasn't sure what to expect from this, but it has felt helpful saying this all out loud and my head feels clearer now."

Feedback from a stroke survivor

"I have found the counselling sessions really helpful and as a result of them I have found ways to make changes in my life that have allowed me to feel more positive."

Feedback from a stroke survivor

Announcement - goodbye to Simon and Kirsty

The launch of our Cornwall Emotional Support Service in 2022 marked a significant step towards enhancing mental health support in our community. This initiative was originally designed as a five-year program, with three years of dedicated counselling services and five years of community engagement work.

In 2023, we were able to extend the counselling services into a fourth year, allowing us to continue supporting individuals until 31st March 2026. However, as we entered this year, we faced the need to restructure our service to ensure that we can sustain funding for a potential fifth year of counselling.

To achieve this, we have had to make the difficult choice to reduce our project engagement hours. As a result, at the end of April our valued Project Engagement Officers Simon and Kirsty will be leaving us. We deeply appreciate their

contributions and commitment to the service, and we understand that this news may be disappointing for those who have worked closely with them.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to providing essential support for stroke survivors and their families and we will continue to explore ways to enhance our services for everyone in need.

News from the Cornwall Key Worker service

What difference has the Cornwall Key Worker Service made?

Since January 2025, the Cornwall Key Worker service has received **34 referrals**, the majority have been made by NHS colleagues working in the **Integrated Community Stroke Service (ICSS)**.

Benefits and Finance, Understanding of Stroke and Emotional Wellbeing and Health have been the main identified needs for the stroke survivors referred to the service.

Since January 2025, the **Cornwall Key Worker Service** has also provided **£1,056.95** in **hardship grants** for **food or clothing support** for those stroke survivors and families in financial difficulty.

Feedback received from those accessing the Cornwall Key Worker service between January and March 2025

"At my six month review I mentioned you by name as one of the most kind, informative and helpful people I met that really helped me. Thank you so much".

Feedback from a stroke survivor

"You are the only person through my stroke journey that has made me feel confident and able to do things for myself. And thank you for calling today, you have really raised my spirits and have made me feel so happy. I feel like me again." **Feedback from a stroke survivor**

A **stroke survivor** shared on a home visit that while attending a Stroke Association online webinar he wrote an introduction as he was worried about his aphasia. He asked me to read it, he explained he had received invaluable support from the Stroke Association and that his support worker was a ray of sunshine that was keeping him motivated.

"I just wanted to email and send you a big thank you for all your support with this chap. They found your session this week really helpful and trialled having savoury snacks overnight rather than chocolate with good effect! It is wonderful having your

support, the patients are speaking very highly of your service." **Feedback from a Stroke Specialist Occupational Therapist**

Online communication workshop

In March, the Cornwall Key Worker service team launched a 6 week, weekly online **communication workshop for stroke survivors with aphasia**.

Each week **different topics are suggested as the focus** of the session and have included: **Communication, Hobbies, Travel, and The Senses**. Games and conversation starters have been used within the sessions but **the stroke survivors attending really like to chat to each other**. The weekly workshop is an opportunity for those attending to be vulnerable and to **practice talking in a safe space**, as well as a way to **increase confidence in their communication** and to **share their lived experience**.

Feedback has already been **really positive**;

"It is really lovely to speak with people that know what I am going through. You have picked a good bunch of people - we all get on well"

"The support that I have received from the Stroke Association has been amazing and I am very grateful"

"Absolutely fantastic. I love the way you have topics, but that we are able to chat and connect with each other. Conversation just flows and everyone listens to each other. Your call is my favourite call of the week."

For more information please email: cornwallstrokesupport@stroke.org.uk

Stroke Association news

Request for testimonials from our health partners.

Surviving a stroke is just the start of a long recovery journey. The Stroke Association supports stroke survivors and their families to find the strength they need to find their way back to life.

Testimonials from the professionals we work with are really important. They can help to demonstrate how the support that we provide benefits their patients throughout their recovery journey. We are asking our health partners to provide testimonials that we can use to demonstrate the value of our stroke support.

If you are able to provide a testimonial please follow the link below.

[Healthcare professional testimonial](#)

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**.

This update combines news from the **Stroke Association's Cornwall Emotional Support Service** and from the **Cornwall Key Worker Service**.