**Stroke charity is ‘Here for You’**

The Stroke Association has launched a new volunteer-run telephone support service to help stroke survivors who are feeling lonely or isolated.

Here for You provides stroke survivors and their carers with regular telephone support and the charity wants to attract more volunteers to help rebuild lives after stroke.

The coronavirus pandemic has meant that all Stroke Association Groups in Wales have been unable to meet, meaning stroke survivors are missing the vital support from other people who’ve had a stroke.

The charity is unsure when these groups will be able to start up their face-to-face meetings again.

Under the Here for You service, stroke survivors and their carers can sign up for a half hour weekly phone call with a trained Stroke Association volunteer, for 12 weeks.

Here for You offers two kinds of support:

* ‘Lived Experience’ telephone volunteers who have experienced stroke themselves and can connect with recent stroke survivors and help them talk through the challenges they are facing.
* ‘Connect and Chat’ volunteers who can talk and offer an empathetic ear to stroke survivors who are experiencing loneliness and isolation and would welcome a friendly voice for a weekly chat.

Theo Baker, from Newport has been a ‘Connect and Chat’ volunteer for three months.

“I have really enjoyed our weekly calls. They’ve given me perspective during the pandemic as it is amazing to see what people can overcome. Each week I have noticed how his confidence and speech are improving and I’m also learning new ways of getting better at supporting him too.

“It gives him a chance to get certain things off his chest and is a check-in where you can be totally honest with how you feel as it’s one to one. It has made a difference to my mood and wellbeing too.

It’s so rewarding to know that I can make a direct positive impact on someone’s life”

The Stroke Association can offer support in over 20 languages including Welsh.

Llinos Wyn Parry, Stroke Association’s Head of Stroke Support for Mid and North Wales said: ‘’The response from Welsh-speaking volunteers has been overwhelming.

“We‘re fully committed to supporting people who’ve had a stroke in their language of choice and are truly grateful and encouraged to see so many volunteers eager to help us achieve our mission.’’

If you’re feeling lonely, isolated and in need of a chat, or if you want to become a volunteer visit Stroke Association website: <https://www.stroke.org.uk/finding-support/here-for-you> or call the Stroke Helpline: 0303 3033 100

Volunteers are expected to attend a two hour online training session delivered by the Stroke Association and make one, 30 minute phone call per week for 12 weeks. Whilst people need to have experience of stroke personally or as a carer to undertake the ‘Lived Experience’ telephone support volunteer role, the ‘Connect and Chat’ volunteer role is open to anyone regardless of stroke experience.

For more information on how to access the service or to volunteer, please visit [www.stroke.org.uk/hereforyou](http://www.stroke.org.uk/hereforyou).

**ENDS**

For more information, please contact Laura Thomas [laura.thomas@stroke.org.uk](mailto:laura.thomas@stroke.org.uk) or 07776508594

**Notes to Editor**

1. The languages we can offer support through our current volunteers are English, Welsh, French, German, Mandarin, Punjabi, Bengali, Hebrew, Japanese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Spanish, Swedish, Urdu, Portuguese, Somali, Hindi, Shona, Tamil, Turkish and Malayalam. Support in BSL over video call is also currently available

**About the Stroke Association**

* Stroke strikes every five minutes in the UK and it changes lives in an instant.
* The Stroke Association is a charity working across the UK to support people to rebuild their lives after stroke. We believe that everyone deserves to live the best life they can after stroke. From local support services and groups, to online information and support, anyone affected by stroke can visit stroke.org.uk or call our dedicated Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100 to find out about support available locally.
* Our specialist support, research and campaigning are only possible with the courage and determination of the stroke community and the generosity of our supporters. With more donations and support, we can help rebuild even more lives.
* You can follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/TheStrokeAssoc), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/TheStrokeAssociation/)and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/thestrokeassociation/).