

STROKE WELLBEING SERVICE NEWSLETTER

The monthly newsletter produced by the
North Cumbria Stroke Wellbeing Service



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Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the new monthly newsletter by the Stroke Wellbeing Service. We hope that this newsletter will keep all of our patients, family members, carers and colleagues up to date with the service.

In this issue we introduce ourselves as a team and tell you more about us. We look at ways to stay well during COVID19 and we also look at pacing and fatigue.

For information on how to get involved in the next issue, see page 8.

See you next month!

- The Stroke Wellbeing Service

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Meet the Team



Dr Sarah Fryer
Consultant Clinical
Neuropsychologist

Sarah has over 20 years of experience in neurorehabilitation. She has worked in Glasgow and Cumbria with adults who have experienced brain injury, stroke, multiple sclerosis, and other neurological conditions. Sarah works part time with the Stroke Wellbeing Service offering assessments for people worried about changes in thinking (or cognitive) skills after stroke. She also sees some people for whom stroke related mood and cognitive problems are causing problems months or even years after stroke. When not working Sarah enjoys spending time exploring new places with her family.



Laura Cairns
Senior Psychological
Practitioner

Laura joined our team in April 2020. She has worked in brain injury and in adult mental health services in Cumbria for 15 years. She joined our team from First Step, where she completed her training in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Interpersonal Therapy. You might meet Laura for an assessment or to work through difficulties you might be experiencing with low mood or anxiety after your stroke. When not working Laura can usually be found on her yoga mat!

Eileen Kirby Wellbeing Activator

Eileen joined the team in April 2020 having worked in education, outreach services and public health as a Health and Wellbeing Coach where she completed her advanced diploma in Health and Wellbeing Coaching. She will be working within the hospital and the community stroke services providing assessment, individual and group work to support self-management difficulties following stroke. When not working, Eileen loves to read, stroll in the countryside practicing mindfulness with macro photography and drink coffee with friends.

Meet the Team



Jocelyn Moar
Living Well Coach



Lauren Tait
Living Well Coach

Jocelyn joined our team in April 2020, having recently moved to Cumbria from Edinburgh. Before joining us, Jocelyn worked as a coach supporting people to manage their mental health and wellbeing through positive lifestyle changes and physical activity. Jocelyn will be able to support you to practice some useful coping strategies to help you manage some of the difficulties you may be facing in your daily life after stroke. She is happiest outside in trainers, running around in the countryside!

Lauren joined the team in March 2020. She previously worked as an MDT Assistant in Cancer Services and before that, as a Ward Clark on the Emergency Surgical Assessment Unit at the Cumberland Infirmary. Lauren may work with you to develop coping techniques for overcoming anxiety and during stressful situations. Lauren enjoys decorating and DIY and going on bike rides with her daughter.

History of the service

The Stroke Wellbeing Service was launched to support people in North Cumbria following a stroke. The service is part of North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Trust based at the Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle and is part of wider changes to stroke services in the county. The Hyper Acute Stroke Unit has been seeing patients since October 2019 and this innovative new service has been developed to support the work they do, as well as the Early Supported Stroke Discharge Teams that work within the community.

Rates of depression and anxiety are high after strokes, and recovery is often made harder by changes in thinking skills such as memory and problem solving abilities that the person would usually draw on to help them adapt to change. The new service aims to offer assessments to every patient admitted to a hospital within North Cumbria as a result of a stroke to ensure early identification of any wellbeing needs. Patients will have the opportunity to have their mood and cognitive skills assessed and to discuss worry or anxiety developing as a result of their stroke. Where needs are identified, the team will offer one to one or group sessions aimed at giving coping skills for managing common emotional reactions and cognitive difficulties.

About the Service

Who we are

The Stroke Wellbeing Service works with people following a stroke to help them to better understand and manage the emotional impact. We work across North Cumbria to offer assessment, therapy, support and advice to patients who are recovering from a stroke. We work closely with the staff on the wards and the Early Supported Stroke Discharge Teams in the community.

What you can expect from us?

One of our team will spend some time talking to you, to assess how we can best support you, and offer advice on strategies that can help you manage difficulties you are facing in your daily life. Our psychological therapist and neuropsychologist are supported by our Wellbeing Activator and Living Well Coaches who can offer additional one to one, and group sessions when you return home. They can support you to practice useful coping strategies for common cognitive and emotional problems. This might include using mindfulness techniques to manage anxiety and help boost your mood, and strategies to help you improve your memory, thinking and organisational skills.



What is a Stroke?

There are over 1.2 million stroke survivors in the UK and there are more than 100,000 strokes in the UK each year, which is around one stroke every five minutes.

A stroke is a brain attack, it happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off. For many people a stroke happens very suddenly, leaving people with little time to prepare. Feelings of disbelief, anger, sadness and worry can all be common, and are understandable reactions to a sudden traumatic event. A stroke can affect how you move, think and feel, and be life changing for you and your family. The road to recovery can be difficult, but we are here to support you through this process.



Covid-19

All of our lives have been affected by the current Coronavirus pandemic and the resulting lockdown. We have had to adapt the way we are working as we are not currently able to see patients face to face. Our appointments right now are happening on the telephone but we hope to get back onto the ward and seeing people face to face soon.

We know that rehab can be difficult in these times. Perhaps you haven't been able to see key members of your rehab team at the moment or have had to shield. Or maybe you are just missing your friends, family, or usual routine.

It is understandable if you feel your mood has been affected by this, a lot of us are struggling. There are some things that you can do to improve your wellbeing right now, but remember to follow all government guidance to stay safe.

Do something you enjoy every day

Try and follow a routine

If you can, get out of the house for your daily exercise

Follow your rehab plan

Eat a balanced diet

Get enough sleep, and rest

Keep connected - talk to friends and family on the phone or video chats

Keep your home tidy



Fatigue and Pacing

Every issue we will give some information on the common after effects of a stroke. A lot of people tell us that they get much more fatigued than they used to and it can be difficult to understand and to adjust to.

What is fatigue?

Fatigue is a common symptom after stroke. It is more than just tiredness and you can feel weak or lacking in energy. It does not always happen after activity and doesn't always improve after a rest.

We don't always know why some people experience fatigue and other people don't, but it is likely due to physical and emotional factors.



Fatigue can continue to be a problem even years after a stroke and so it is important to know how to manage it.

Pacing is one way to manage fatigue and knowing how to do this can avoid us falling into a 'boom and bust' cycle where we use all of our energy in one go and have nothing left.

We have produced a video with more information on fatigue and pacing, and you can watch it on our website <https://php.cumbria.nhs.uk/patients/resources/neuropsychology>

This is the first of our series of short information videos and it talks about fatigue after stroke and offers some tips about pacing to improve recovery. The video explains what fatigue is, how it differs from tiredness, how it can make you feel and why you may be feeling fatigued.

Information is given about pacing, what it is and why it is important in your recovery, before giving tips about how to pace yourself using the five Ps; planning, prioritising, pacing, posture and permission. Finally, the video provides links to our website and the Stroke Association for further information and support.

Get involved

We would love to hear from our readers. What do you think of our newsletter? Get in touch and let us know what kinds of features you would like to see. We'd also love to feature some of our success stories. So if you've had a positive outcome working with the stroke wellbeing service and want to share it in the next issue, let us know!

Email: PhysicalHealth.Psychology@ncic.nhs.uk

Further Resources

<https://php.cumbria.nhs.uk/patients/resources/neuropsychology> - This website has been designed to give you some extra information on things you can try yourself to manage the problems most commonly reported by the people we see

www.stroke.org.uk - The Stroke Association support people to rebuild their lives after stroke

Stroke Association Helpline: 0303 3033 100

Further information

Confidentiality

'The Trust's vision is to keep your information safe in our hands.' We promise to use your information fairly and legally, and in-line with local and national policies. You have a right to understand how your information is used and you can request a copy of the information we hold about you at any time.

For further information contact the Information Governance Team on 01228 608998 or email: Information.Governance@cumbria.nhs.uk

Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback, which helps us to improve our services. If you have any comments, compliments or complaints to make about your care, please contact the Patient Experience Team. Email: PET@cumbria.nhs.uk Tel: 01228 602128 Freephone: 0800 633 5547

If you would like this leaflet in another language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio, please call: 01228 603890, Email: communications.helpdesk@cumbria.nhs.uk or write to Engagement and Communications Voreda House | Portland Place | Penrith | CA11 7QQ

Contact Us

If you would like any additional information about the support we can offer please contact us via phone or email using the details below.

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