

Here For You – helping to rebuild life after stroke

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10 March 2023 – European Life After Stroke Forum

Stroke
Association

stroke.org.uk

About us



Our Vision

Our vision is for there to be fewer strokes, and for people affected by stroke to get the help they need to live the best life they can.

Rebuilding lives
after **stroke**

How do we make a difference?

Research

Influencing

Service
Delivery

Service Delivery

- Stroke Recovery Services
- **Stroke Connect**
- Helpline
- My Stroke Guide / Website
- **Here for You**



Here For You

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Responding to the Covid Pandemic

- We had to stop all or face-to-face services
- Clubs and voluntary groups closed
- Stroke survivors discharged from hospital without any follow-on care
- Our “Stroke Recoveries at Risk” report and calls on our helpline, demonstrated that some stroke survivors were feeling isolated and lonely
- At the same time many people on furlough or unable to work who wanted to volunteer and give back

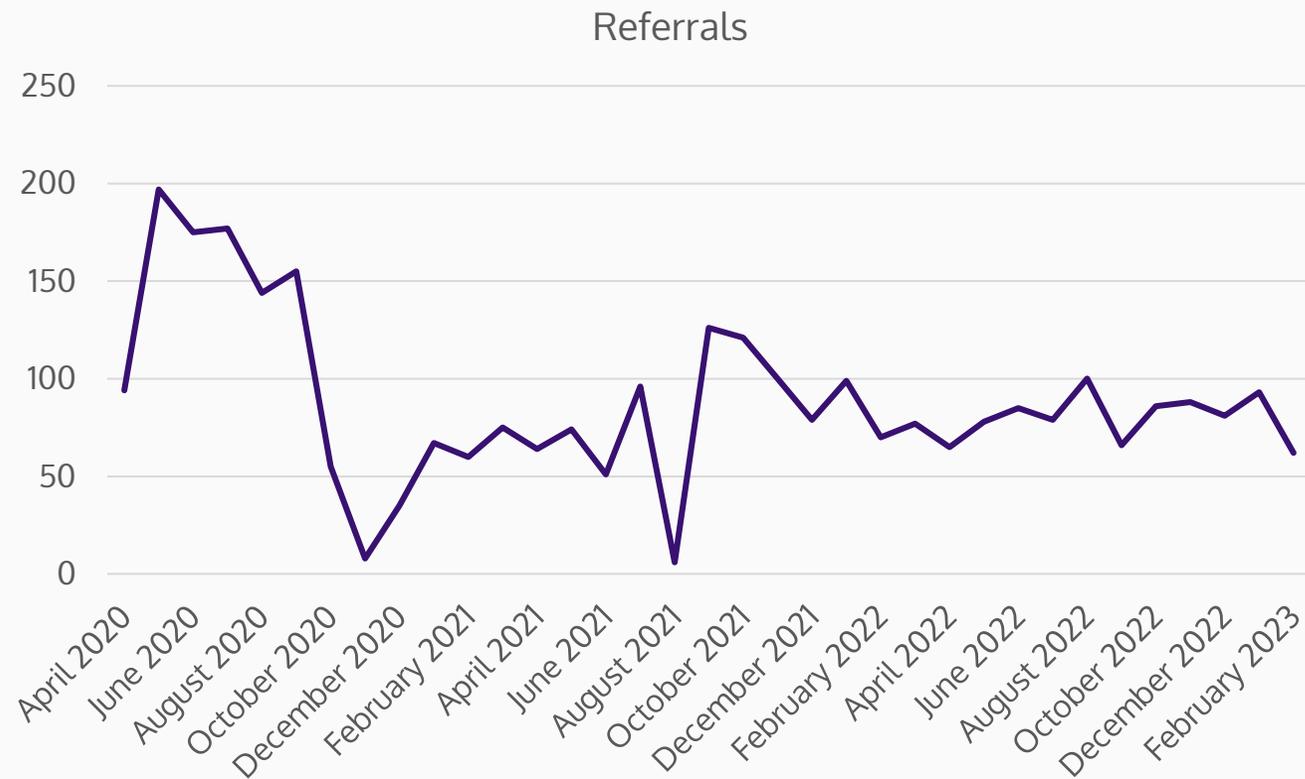


Here For You – weekly volunteer calls

- Free weekly 30 minute calls for 8 weeks with two options:
 - Lived experience volunteer offering peer support – matched by impact of stroke and interests
 - Connect and chat volunteer offering social chat – matched by interests



The service was set up in the early days of the pandemic and has evolved and stabilised



- Overwhelming early demand reflecting very little post-acute support during lockdowns
- Picture changes at the world opens up.
- Much clearer about who benefits and why

Early qualitative evaluation suggested more nuanced value and distinction between Lived Experience and Connect and Chat

Qualitative evaluation

Call backs with 27 stroke survivors, 1 carer; 17 female, 11 male; 4 people with aphasia

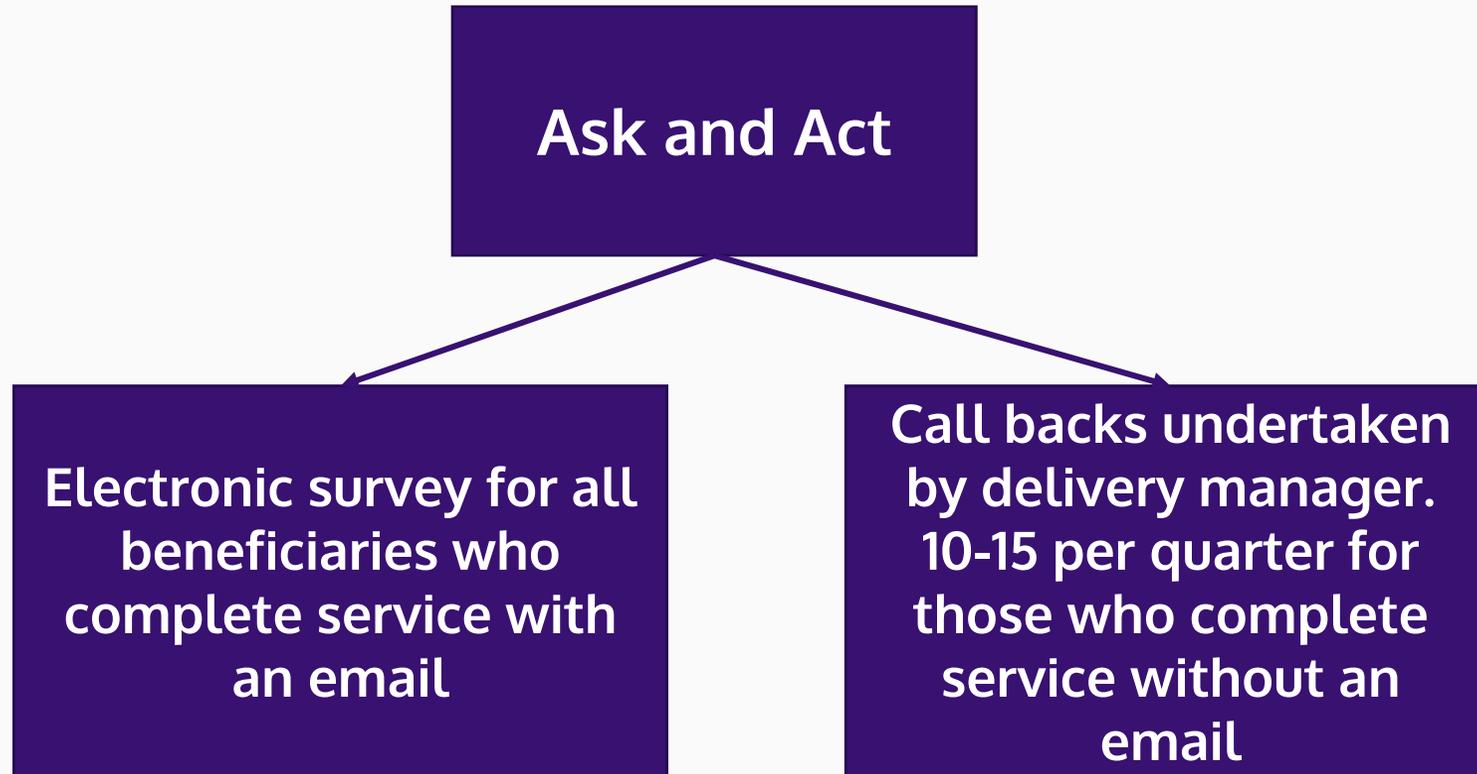
Lived Experience

- Coping or receiving practical advice about living with stroke
- Shared experience of stroke
- Similar personalities or interests
- Feeling understood
- Reduced loneliness, isolation or depression

Connect and Chat

- Similar personalities or interests
- Reduced loneliness, isolation or depression

Which we used to develop ongoing monitoring tools

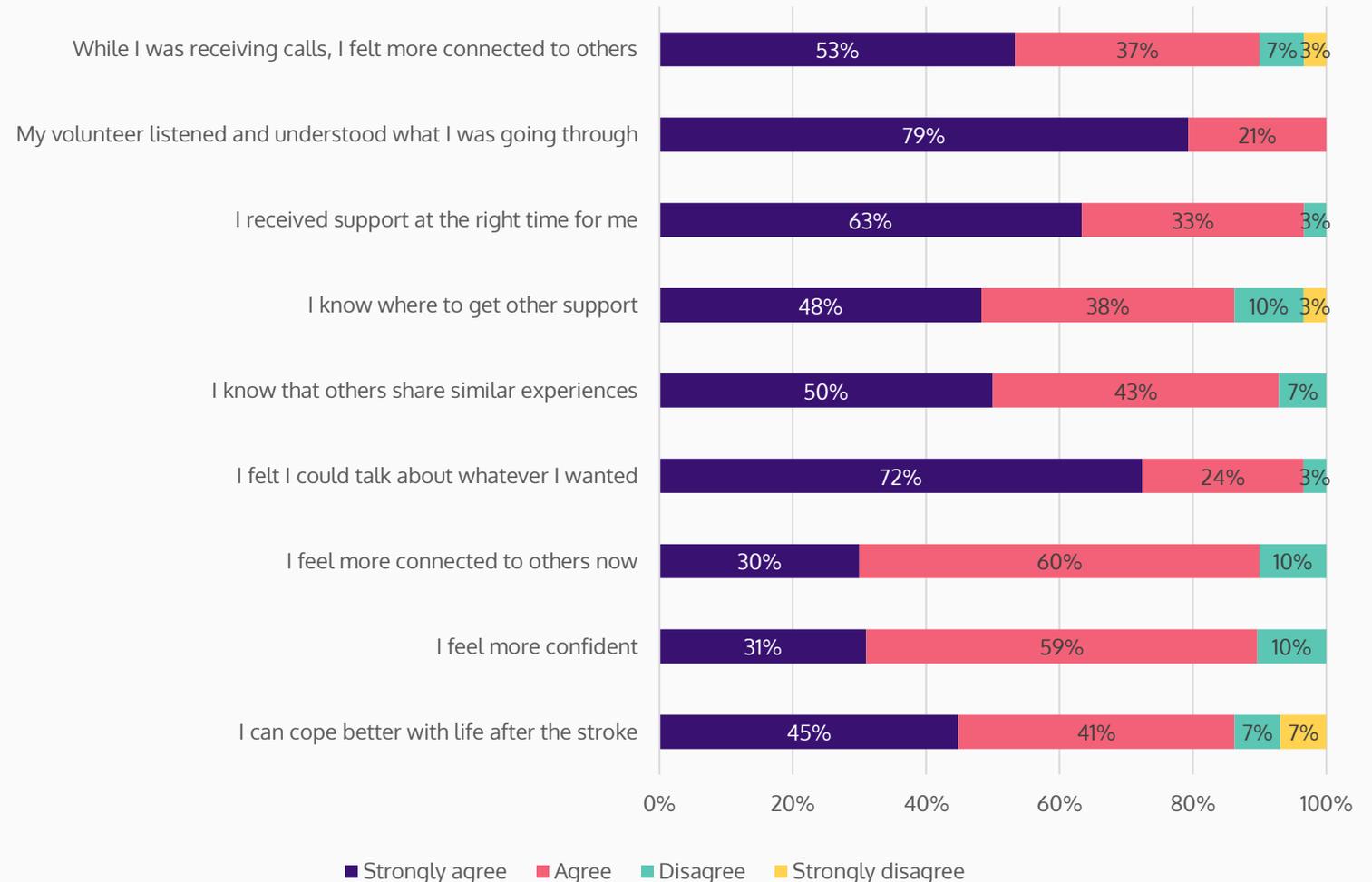


Lived Experience beneficiaries feel more connected, confident and better able to cope with life after stroke

"It helped to cope with what's happened, if I was feeling low and isolated "it lifts you up" when you might not speak to anyone else all day."

"It was lovely to talk to someone who totally understood my thoughts and worries It can be a very lonely time and having someone to talk to helped me so much"

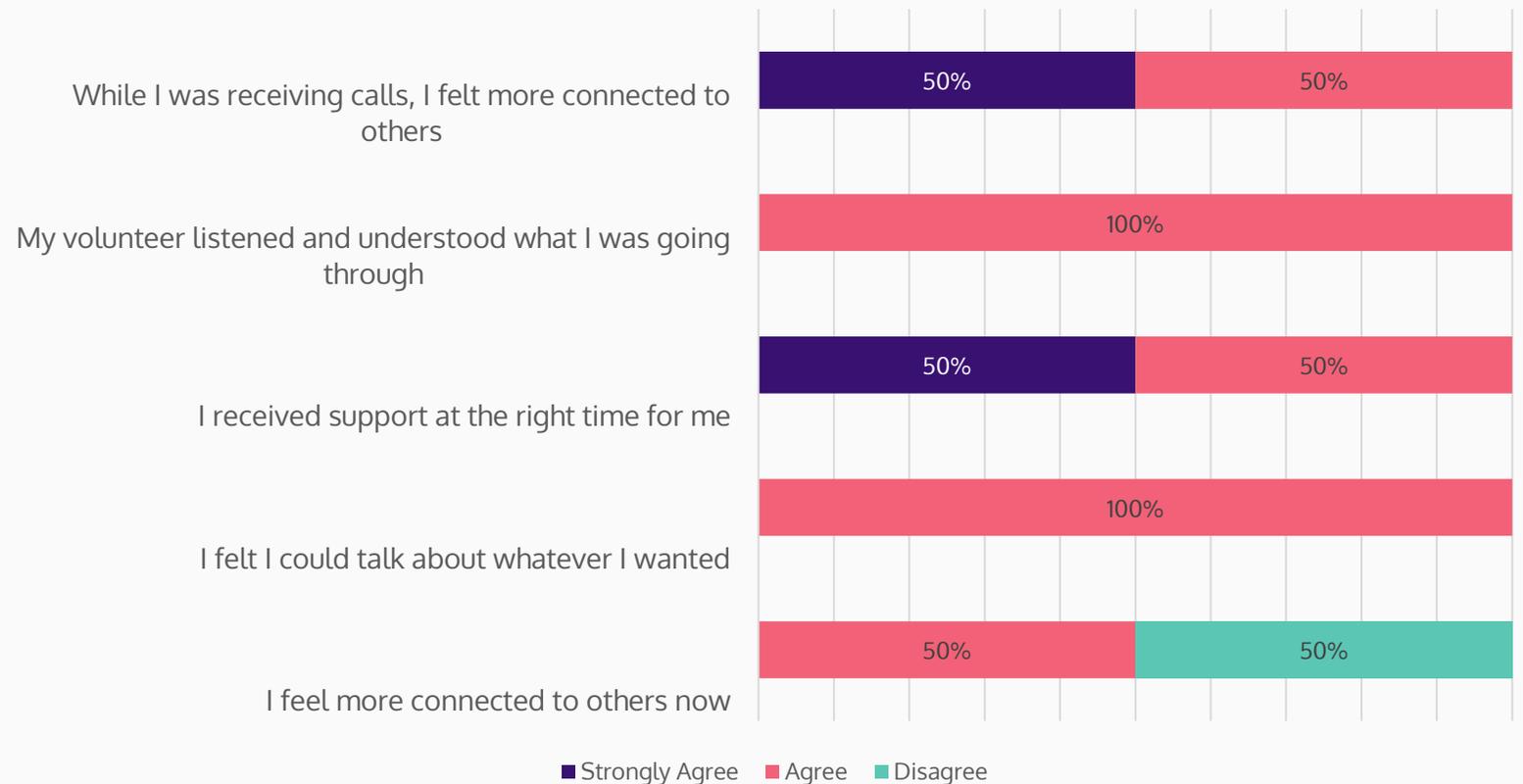
Lived experience



The benefit of Connect and Chat is more limited but still important for many

“It was comforting that somebody was going to call me each week”

Connect and Chat



Our insight aligns with existing evidence around peer support

- Peer support for people with long term health conditions can help people feel **more knowledgeable, confident, happy** and **less isolated and alone** (National Voices, NESTA, 2015)
- Less evidence on peer support and stroke. One 2019 systematic review showed statistically significant changes in **Quality of Life** metrics for people with Acquired Brain Injury, Spina Bifida and Cerebral Palsy who had received peer support (Levy et al., 2019)
- A more recent systematic review of peer support for people with Acquired Brain Injury reported benefits of **being connected** and **interacting with others**. It highlighted that peer support can be a promising intervention to promote adjustment following an ABI (Hughes et al., 2020).

We use an evidence-based, person-centred approach to develop the service

- We use our data and insight to improve quality and experience:
 - KPIs around wait times
 - Improved how people are referred in and signposted afterwards
- We have focused on efficiency to improve the numbers of people we can reach with the resources we have
- Exploring video calling options, especially from an accessibility view point
- We are just about to launch our offer for parents of children with childhood stroke. Volunteer parents to have 2 calls with another parent to offer peer support.

What our volunteers say

"Sometimes, sharing my experience of stroke is helpful because it lets them know that they are not the only person feeling like that. At other times, it is just about giving someone a little bit of encouragement or listening to them."

"This service can mean so much to people. It's a fulfilling experience. We are Here For You, and we are able to help people through their life after stroke."

"I wanted to volunteer for Here For You because it gives me an understanding that I'm not alone, and I have the support too."

More information

Weekly volunteer calls - Here For You



About Here For You

If you or someone you know has had a stroke, a weekly phone conversation with one of our trained volunteers can help you to rebuild your life after stroke. Talking things through on the phone can build confidence. It can help you feel more connected, supported and able to take the next step in your recovery.

For eight weeks, a volunteer will chat with you for around 30 minutes. If you speak limited English we've volunteers who can support you in different languages, just let us know.

There are two types of volunteers available depending on your needs:

- You can talk to somebody who's been there. Our Lived Experience volunteers have either had a stroke or care for someone who has. Sharing your experiences can help you understand stroke and learn new ways to cope.
- Or you can talk to a Connect and Chat volunteer and have a social chat about things important to you, like your hobbies or interests.

Useful links

[Sign up to the service](#)

[Sign up someone else](#)

[Sign up as a volunteer](#)

www.stroke.org.uk/finding-support/here-for-you

www.stroke.org.uk



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