



Irish Heart Foundation

The National Stroke & Heart Charity



Irish Heart
Foundation

The National Stroke & Heart Charity

Disclosure Statement

There are no conflicts of interest to declare



Stroke Connect Service

Filling the gap for support post-discharge



We are Ireland's National Heart and Stroke Charity

Established in 1966, our mission is to eliminate preventable death and disability from heart disease and stroke and to support and care for those living with these life-changing conditions.

We work to achieve our mission through:

- Caring for and speaking out for people in the community living with stroke and heart conditions and their families
- Innovating and leading in health promotion and prevention to change health behaviours and reduce cardiovascular risk
- Building a nation of lifesavers through CPR training
- Campaigning and advocating for policies that support people to live healthier lives

Stroke in Ireland in 2022



5,986

hospitalised
strokes in
2022



55,821 people
living with the
affects of stroke



Deaths by stroke
down by **30%** in a
decade

Estimated using the StrokeCog epidemiological model:

<https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/STROKEAHA.121.034005>

Background to our stroke support services

Our services are built on:

1

**A strong
evidence
base of
research**

2

**Membership
of key patient
organisations**

3

**New service
model post
covid, offering
hybrid services**

**We have approx. 6,000 people
living with heart disease and
stroke in our network.**

But Life After Stroke.....

After hospital, after rehabilitation, after returning home....



How do I fill my day?

**Why do I not feel like
"me" anymore?**

Am I the only one?

What do I do now?

**Why do I feel so
tired?**

**How do I get back to
work?**



How do stroke survivors describe feeling about leaving the hospital?

The National Stroke & Heart Charity



They described ...

World turned upside down



How do we address this need?

Irish Heart Foundation | Stroke Support Pathway



Referral received



Holistic assessment of need



Stroke Connect Service



8 weeks of phone support



Navigating life after stroke



Parallel services

- ✓ Counselling
- ✓ Referral back to Nurseline
- ✓ Signposting to other supports and organisations
- ✓ Supports for carers



After Stroke Connect

Options for ongoing IHF Supports



- ✓ Short term courses
- ✓ Peer to Peer
- ✓ Creative therapy
- ✓ Face to face meetings
- ✓ Online peer support
- ✓ Young Stroke Survivor Network-YSSN



Stay Connected







Information and signposting



- Nurse Support Line – assessment of need, practical support, secondary prevention advice, red flags
- Digital and print – website, booklets, videos
- Information talks – World Stroke Day, online and face to face



Education – coping with common challenges

Do you want to improve your cognitive function post stroke?

- 1 Improve your memory, attention and information processing skills
- 2 Learn & Develop skills
- 3 Participate in theory & practical elements
- 4 Share your experiences in a safe and supportive environment



Mondays & Thursdays
4.00-5.30pm

 Irish Heart Foundation

FATIGUE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

What Causes Fatigue?

Friday September 29th @ 11am
6 weeks on Zoom

Ways to Manage Your Fatigue

How Fatigue Affects People

Contact your Coordinator or
Fiona Smith 087 2172791
fsmith@irishheart.ie

 Irish Heart Foundation

ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT RETURNING TO WORK?

JOIN OUR VOCATIONAL RETURN TO WORK SHORT COURSE



Starts 12th September 2023
2.30pm - 4pm
7 week course
On Zoom

To express your interest contact Niamh Corry
ncorry@irishheart.ie | 0871900417



Psychological and emotional support

Mental Health



Physical Health

- Counselling – 6 free sessions
- ACTivate Your Life (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy)
- Mindfulness/Self Compassion short term course

Irish Heart Foundation stepped care psychological approach

Level 3 support: high Intensity

Signpost to clinical support -
neuropsychology, GP, acute
services

Level 2 support: medium Intensity:

Psycho-education programmes,
mindfulness programmes,
counselling- 6 sessions

Level 1 support: low Intensity:

Nurse Support Line advice, support and
signposting, peer support via groups, 1 to
1, Facebook Stroke and Heart Connect



Social reintegration

- Reintegrating with community and social networks
- Reconnecting with activities and leisure
 - exercise, social outings, choir, art therapy
- Signposting to other services – men's sheds , social prescribing





Peer support

Finding your tribe – you are not alone

- 1-1 Peer to Peer
- Stroke Support Groups-19 around Ireland
- WhatsApp-Young Stroke Survivor Network
- Facebook-Life After Stroke
- Online peer support





John

- 81 years old
- 2 Strokes (2009 and 2023)
- Referred to Stroke Connect after second stroke

"Someone was interested in me – the listening ear made all the difference."

- Accessed Irish Heart Foundation counselling, Monday Club and monthly support group

Patient Champions in Advocacy

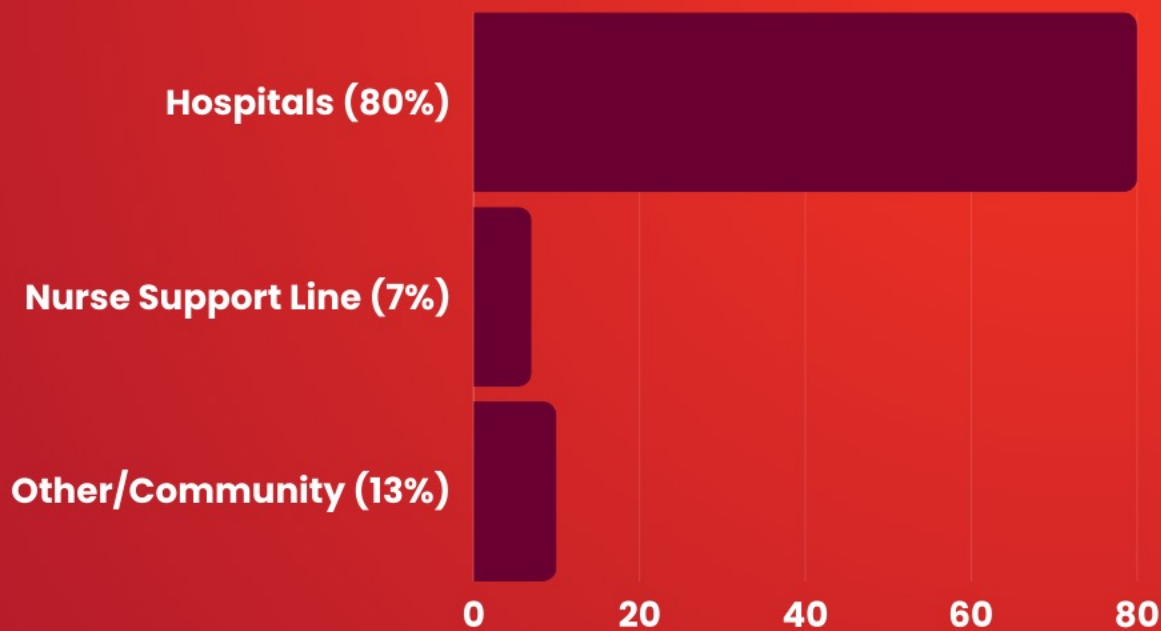
Training patients in advocacy skills to shape a better future for heart and stroke patients in Ireland

- Launched in 2023
- Benefits for patient
 - Empowers patients in their own advocacy endeavours
 - Provides ongoing peer support to patient advocates
 - Upskills patients
 - Advances patient's knowledge in advocacy
 - Helps build local profile in community



Stroke Connect Referrals

Where do our referrals come from?



Over **↑ 65** 58%
Under **↓ 65** 42%

 **53% Male**

 **47% Female**

Stroke Connect

2,621
referrals to date



949

Assessments
of Need



15,540

calls

Additional Support on Stroke Connect Service:

302

counselling
referrals



Signposting
to other
services



Impact of Services 2023

Short Term Courses

- Overall satisfaction of 91% across all short-term courses

Counselling

95.5% found it beneficial

- *"Best thing I ever did. Answered questions that no one else could answer. Always came out feeling 50% better than I did going in."*

Nurse Support Line

- 95.05% rated their experience with the service as "very positive"

Stroke Connect Service:

- 90% reported they were satisfied that the person making the calls was supportive and listened to their needs
- Quote from patient: *"I would have been in a very dark place without the Irish Heart Foundation."*

The National Stroke & Heart Charity



Learnings ...



- Takes time to bed the service down
- Challenges with missed calls, unanswered calls, members with aphasia/hearing
- Calls need to have structure

And opportunities...

- In 2023, we reached over ¼ of all Stroke Survivors and their families
- Increased funding would allow for service growth
- Cost effective, scalable and more reach
- Accessible to those unable to travel/access a group
- Flexible service



And the secret sauce....



CONNECTION

“Social interaction improves quality of life and decreases mortality after stroke.”

Venna VR, Xu Y, Doran SJ, Patrizz A, McCullough LD. Social interaction plays a critical role in neurogenesis and recovery after stroke. *Transl Psychiatry*. 2014 Jan 28;4(1):e351. doi: 10.1038/tp.2013.128. PMID: 24473442; PMCID: PMC3905235



**Irish Heart
Foundation**

The National Stroke & Heart Charities

Noel McLaughlin