

*From The Stroke Association*

9<sup>th</sup> November 2010

## **New guidance heralds long-term cooperation between health, charity and social care sectors to combat stroke in London.**

London's Primary Care Trusts, social services and voluntary organisations have come together to launch "Commissioning Life After Stroke Services", a guide by Commissioning Support for London. The guide, for the first time, gives a road-map detailing how charities and community sector organisations can work together with public sector partners to fight stroke in a coordinated and strategic way.

Stroke is the UK's third biggest killer, and the leading cause of severe adult disability. 150,000 people have a stroke every year in the UK, including 9,000 in London; of these, two thirds will survive but a third of those will be left with significant speech and physical problems.

Professor Tony Rudd, Clinical Stroke Lead on Healthcare for London says "It is vital that we improve the quality of longer term care for stroke patients in London. Already we have seen the London Stroke Strategy produce major improvements in acute care but little has changed for people being discharged home with persisting problems. My hope is that this document will help commissioners organise their services in a more effective, caring and cost efficient way".

Tom Greenwood, Head of London Operations at the Stroke Association says "The clear leadership provided by the guide gives a crucial framework to how services will develop and interact with each other at a time when the health and social care landscape is changing. It is the first time anyone has attempted to define the role of charities and community organisations in combating stroke. Up to this point, services have often developed in unplanned ways with little consistency from one borough to the next. This was at odds with the systematic approach to combating stroke that had been embodied in the London Stroke Strategy that was fully implemented in July 2010".

The new guide aspires to be used by commissioners like a recipe book, helping them create the right kind of service mix needed by stroke survivors in their borough. It will ensure that across London all commissioning will happen to the best standard no matter who is doing it, and that no one will be at the mercy of a 'postcode lottery'.

The guide will be launched at the Commissioning Life After Stroke Services Conference on the 9<sup>th</sup> November at the Coin Street Centre, South London. As well as the launch, the Conference will showcase many of the best ways in which statutory and community providers

are now working together to deliver practical, useful and relevant services to stroke survivors in innovative and cost effective ways.

The London Stroke Directory, to be launched at the Conference, puts Stroke Survivors in the driving seat of their own recovery. The directory makes relevant and local information easily available in a straightforward and simple format. The directory is fully accessible, and designed particularly for stroke survivors with language difficulties. The Directory also gives Stroke Survivors the ability to leave comments, and rate those services they think are particularly helpful.

For more details of the conference and its speakers please go to:

<http://www.stroke.org.uk/professionals/events/lsscconference.html> or call the Stroke Association Media Team on 0207 5661 500.

For more details about the London Stroke Directory please go to:

<http://www.londonstrokedirectory.org.uk/>

#### **Notes to editors:**

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The Stroke Association is the only UK charity solely concerned with combating stroke in people of all ages. The charity funds research into prevention, treatment, better methods of rehabilitation and helps stroke patients and their families directly through its Life After Stroke Services, information service, welfare grants, publications and leaflets.

The Stroke Association also campaigns, educates and informs to increase knowledge of stroke at all levels of society acting as a voice for everyone affected by stroke.

The Stroke Helpline provides information on stroke to the general public and is open between 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday on 0303 30 33 100.

More information on The Stroke Association can be found at [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk).

#### **About stroke:**

- A stroke is a brain attack, which causes brain damage.
- A stroke happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is disrupted. Most strokes occur when a blood clot blocks the flow of blood to the brain. Some strokes are caused by bleeding in or around the brain from a burst blood vessel. When the blood supply is disrupted, parts of the brain become damaged or destroyed. Some strokes are fatal whilst others can cause permanent or temporary disabilities such as paralysis to one side of the body and loss of the ability to speak, read or write. Recovery may be slow and can vary from person to person.
- Strokes can be prevented through lifestyle factors such as a healthy diet - particularly reducing salt intake, drinking alcohol only in moderation, not smoking and taking regular exercise.

#### **South London Cardiac and Stroke Network**

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- A stroke can be diagnosed by using FAST – Facial weakness, Arm weakness, Speech problems, Time to call 999. Stroke is a medical emergency. If any of these symptoms are present, call an ambulance straight away.

#### **Stroke statistics**

- Each year an estimated 150,000 people in the UK have a stroke
- Stroke is the third biggest killer and the leading cause of severe disability
- Of all people who suffer from a stroke, about a third are likely to die within the first 10 days, about a third are likely to make a recovery within one month and about a third are likely to be left disabled and needing rehabilitation
- At least 300,000 people in England are living with moderate to severe disabilities as a result of a stroke
- A stroke can happen to any one at any time. Around a quarter of strokes happen to those aged under 65, with around 1000 happening to those under 30