

'Abandoned' stroke survivors need better longer-term care, expert says

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Stroke patients need better long-term support to ensure their health and social care needs are met and prevent them feeling "abandoned", a University of Leeds expert says.

Speaking on World Stroke Day (October 29), Professor Anne Forster, from the School of Medicine, one of the UK's leading experts in care for [stroke patients](#), suggests that although [survival rates](#) have improved significantly, with stroke mortality rates halving over the last 20 years, more needs to be done to safeguard the long-term welfare of stroke patients and their families.

Professor Forster said: "There are many stroke patients who feel abandoned and lost once they are discharged from hospital. In many cases, they may only receive three months of after-care, even though national clinical guidelines recommend a review of their condition after six months.

"But there is no defined care pathway for these patients and their families after a short period of post-hospital rehabilitation. The UK is very good at looking after patients in a hospital setting but it is the responsibility of clinical commissioning groups to make sure the longer-term needs of stroke patients and their carers are met."

In the UK, someone suffers a stroke every five minutes and one in five strokes is fatal. Strokes are caused either by a blockage on a blood vessel, which accounts for about 85% of cases, or bleeding in the brain,

which accounts for the other 15%.

A third of stroke patients suffer some physical impairment as a result of a stroke, with a third left prone to depression. Patients can require help with mobility, managing emotions and maintaining relationships.

Professor Forster leads on the Lots2Care programme, a research project which is working with centres in England to trial interventions to address the longer-term needs of [stroke survivors](#) and their families.

She added: "My research group, based in Bradford and Leeds, is trying to examine ways in which the longer-term unmet needs of stroke survivors can be identified and addressed, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. What's required is a nationally co-ordinated programme so that everyone, stroke survivors and health professionals, has a clearly defined longer-term care pathway to work to."

Provided by University of Leeds

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