

# People at the Centre Update 2



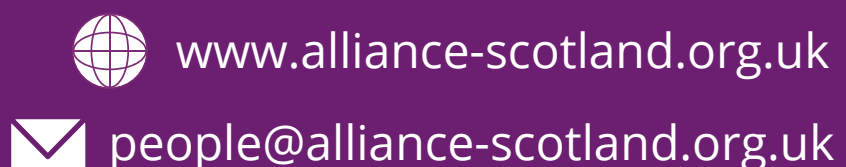
## Urgent action needed to stop COVID-19 creating a stroke care crisis in Scotland

Scotland's largest stroke care charity, Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, has called on the Scottish Government to set out a long-term package of support that sets out a joined-up approach between NHS, Social Care services and charities to ease pressures on stroke services and staff – so that the quality of stroke care can continue to improve.

Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland's intervention comes as a report from the NHS Scottish Stroke Improvement Programme reveals that key targets for accessing vital stroke care were still being significantly missed in 2019.

It is feared that with the added pressures of COVID-19 on the NHS and wider community services, stroke patients' survival and recovery could be further put at risk unless urgent action is taken.

Targets for delivery of what's known as "The Stroke Care Bundle" aim to reduce the risk of death and increase the likelihood of people returning home to recover from their stroke. The Bundle is to ensure quick admission to a stroke unit as well as fast access to vital interventions like a brain scan, swallow screen and administering of aspirin.



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Stroke is the third most common cause of death in Scotland and the most common cause of disability. The impact of COVID-19 and further spikes could put significant strain on NHS resources and see even more demand for Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland's Hospital to Home services – which has already doubled.

Commenting on the report and wider implications from the pandemic, Chief Executive at Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, Jane-Claire Judson, said:

“While the report shows that some progress is being made in some areas, key stroke care targets were still being missed before the COVID-19 pandemic. This report is a warning that we can't let progress towards meeting reasonable targets and delivery of better stroke care stall or go backwards because of the virus.”

“We know that coronavirus is putting the NHS under considerable pressure. We are also being told that the virus could be with us for some time. We need the Scottish Government to come forward with a package of measures that helps stroke care continue to improve and helps people live well at home.”

“The COVID-19 crisis must not develop into a wider stroke care crisis. We have an opportunity to do things better to give people the best possible recovery and reduce future pressures on the NHS.”