

Platinum Jubilee Champion Awards

We are delighted to announce that three stroke support group volunteers have been awarded Queen's Platinum Jubilee Champion Awards for outstanding contributions as volunteers. We want to share with you their stories.



David Burgess

David's voluntary work began in 2005 while he was caring for his father-in-law, a stroke survivor. In response, David helped set up a stroke support group – Stroke North — for people in North Tyneside. He plays a lead role in the running of the group.

Meetings begin with a chat over a cuppa. Then it is a varied programme of speakers, quizzes, art, dominoes, Jenga, boccia and Kurling. The games are fun and competitive, helping members improve balance and co-ordination. David and the team arrange outings too.

David also volunteers with the Stroke Research Network and Stroke Voices in Research. He reviews research proposals and offers his advice on research from a service user perspective.

“I was both honoured and humbled, when I learned that my nomination, by trustees of the stroke support group, had been selected for the Platinum Champions Award. My experience as a carer for my late father-in-law opened my eyes to the needs of stroke survivors and their carers. This experience is at the heart of my engagement with clinicians.”

David Burgess, carer

Stewart Kitching

Following a 28-year career with the Army, Stewart had a stroke at the age of 52. Determined to regain his speech, he had intensive speech therapy. With no stroke support group in his area, he became the founding member of Swale Stroke Group. He has been chairman for 14 years.

Stewart was determined to support others going through the same journey. The group has a volunteer team, including his partner Janet. It has supported over 400 people and their families, going on trips, inviting in guest speakers and running games like bingo and quizzes.

During Covid, Stewart kept in contact with members by telephone, email, and text. For Christmas, he arranged delivery of hampers. With restrictions lifting, he got the group back together at a local park. Members sat and chatted in the open air.

“I am thrilled and honoured to be chosen from the thousands of nominations. All of the volunteers do so much every year. Swale Stroke Group will share this award together.”

Stewart Kitching, stroke survivor

Colin Williams

Colin volunteers at the Burton and District Stroke Club. Founded in 1975, the group is now in its 48th year! Colin organises outings to the countryside, London and the West End.

During Covid-19 the volunteer team sent newsletters, baked cakes and had door stop chats with members. Colin called members weekly to check if they needed anything. He would organise deliveries and he made sure that none of the members went without.

“I had no idea I had been nominated. Our stroke group family (group members) approached our secretary and they got together and sent the nomination. It was such a shock and I still can’t believe it! I am so proud of this award. This honour means so much to me and the group.”

Colin Williams, stroke survivor

It is wonderful to celebrate volunteers like Colin, Stewart and David, who do so much to support people affected by stroke.

This news story was posted on My Stroke Guide. You can find more other inspiring stories and more information about life after stroke by visiting My Stroke Guide in the exhibition area.