



NPT WASP

End of Year 3 Report 2025 - 2026

 **Mind**
Neath Port Talbot
Castell-nedd Port Talbot



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The Story So Far



The WASP team embarked upon the third and final year of Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing After Stroke Project in September 2025. The team utilised feedback received during the first 2 years to adapt and introduce new aspects to some of the support available.

In October of 2025 the Project recruited a Volunteer with lived experience of stroke. With the significant increase in demand on the Project Pathfinder, the volunteers role is to support the Pathfinder, sharing information on upcoming wellbeing sessions, workshops and psycho-educational courses, whilst also collecting expressions of interest to share with the Pathfinder. The volunteer has been a fantastic addition to the team. In May of 2026, one of the Project Counsellors left the team to pursue a career in School Based Counselling with Children and Young People.

The project has continued to be widely promoted with and takes referrals from a wide range of existing partners across Neath Port Talbot (e.g. SBUHB, local Stroke Groups, the Stroke Association, stroke rehabilitation services, Social Workers, Local Area Coordinators, Speech and Language Therapists, Rehabilitation Workers, NPT Carers Centre, Physiotherapists, NPTCVS, Social Prescribers) and on Social Media. The project has also run a number of information events throughout the year, delivering pop-up information sessions across the entire County, and regularly attends networking/promotional events such as the Welsh Stroke Conference, The South West Wales Brain Injury Conference and the Welsh Mental Health Awards.

Target vs Achievement

Year 1

TARGET	ACHIEVED
Survivors—160	Survivors—158
Carers—80	Carers—97
Family Members—50	Family Members—101
TOTAL—290	TOTAL—356

Year 2

TARGET	ACHIEVED
Survivors—160	Survivors—258
Carers—80	Carers—125
Family Members—50	Family Members—128
TOTAL—290	TOTAL—511

Year 3

TARGET	ACHIEVED
Survivors—160	Survivors—397
Carers—80	Carers—152
Family Members—50	Family Members—128
TOTAL—290	TOTAL—677

LIFESPAN

TARGET	ACHIEVED
Survivors 480	Survivors 813
Carers 240	Carers 374
Family 150	Family 357
TOTAL 870	TOTAL 1544



Please find below the breakdown of how many people have accessed each element of the project:

- Wellbeing sessions: 120
- Information sessions: 173
- Pathfinder assessments: 204
- Signposting Support/Advice: 203
- Psychoeducational courses / Workshops: 55
- Talking Therapies: 175
- Hospital Outreach: 447
- Befriending Service: 28

The wellbeing sessions delivered by the project group facilitators during year 3 have included activities such as Tai Chi, Pottery workshops, Bikeability, Calligraphy Workshop, Pyrography, Circus Skills Workshop, African Drumming, Caricature drawing and Animal therapy.

These sessions have been very well received, with the Tai Chi session receiving feedback that the session was relaxing and enjoyable and that they had noticed an improvement in their sleep quality.

The Bikeability session allowed service users to explore how physical activity can improve mental health and that reduced mobility does not need to determine their ability to participate in physical activities, boosting mood and self-esteem. The session encouraged service users to get outdoors and embrace our beautiful natural environment.

The Circus Skills Workshop provided service users a fun and supportive environment to explore new activities and abilities at their own pace. Activities such as juggling, balance and object manipulation encourage confidence, creativity and a sense of achievement.

The Caricature Drawing workshop proved incredibly popular, with service users feeling accomplished in learning a new skill and with a sense of pride from the drawings that they were able to create, and discovering that art is accessible to all regardless of level of skill.

The African Drumming activity allowed service users the opportunity to experience how music can impact mood. Listening to the rhythmic beat of the drums and soothing chants of the performers, while also allowing them to take part in learning to drum and perform a tune as a group, promoting use of gross and fine motor skills and encouraging relationship building / team work.

The Calligraphy Workshop offered a calm and creative space for individuals to express themselves at their own pace. The mindful and repetitive movements involved in Calligraphy can encourage relaxation and improve focus.



Signposting and Support

Over the year, 203 individuals have accessed a Signposting Support session with the Project Pathfinder.

Over the 3 year lifespan of the project 476 individuals accessed a Signposting Support session.

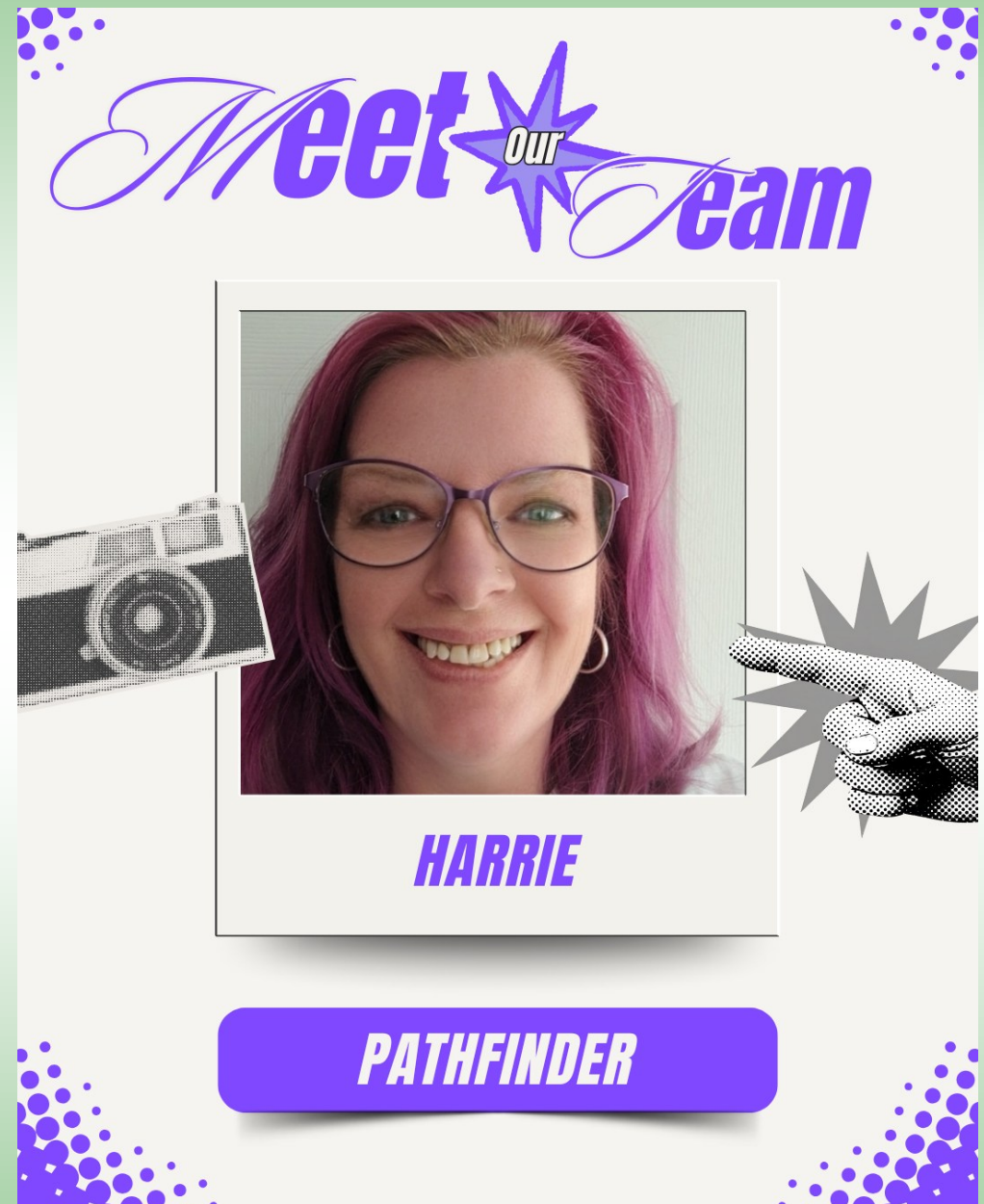
These sessions have assisted clients with onward referrals to Citizen's Advice Bureau and Age Connects for advice and support to complete benefits application forms, Community Occupational Therapy and Sensory Support Service, Neath Port Talbot Carers Service, Sandville Self Help Foundation, Care and Repair, Social Services and many more. The Pathfinder assessments have also supported stroke survivors, their carers and family members to learn more about the mental health support available to them through Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing After Stroke Project and tailored a support package based on their individual needs.

This support has been invaluable to the many individuals who have accessed it, with feedback such as:

“Harrie, you know what you’re talking about, and you get the job done. You understand what I’m going through and that in itself is a huge help!”

And

“Harrie, I just wanted to thank you for all of your efforts in sending me to the right people to help me, I wouldn’t have known where to go or what to say without you. Thanks to you, I am now receiving the correct Benefits and am living a more fulfilled life”.





“Having a professional who I know has support around them helped me to be able to open up fully about my suicidal thoughts and challenges. Knowing a professional has support makes me able to open up without fear of being a burden to someone or distressing them. Having someone who I could meet up virtually with every week gave me something to look forward to because I was able to talk to the counsellor without being judged and without being told what to do.”

Counselling and Supported Self Help

Over the year, 175 Stroke Survivors, their carers and family members have been able to access one to one mental health support, this can be Counselling, Supported Self Help or both, depending on the individual's needs.

Over the 3 year lifespan of the project 418 individuals accessed Counselling and/or Supported Self Help.

Counselling is able to help individuals deal with specific problems, cope with difficult situations, improve relationships, and develop better ways of living. The aim of counselling is not to give advice, but to help people understand their feelings and behaviours better and explore ways of coping.

Supported Self Help is a 6 week programme that allows the individual to learn strategies to manage different life challenges. The programme covers a range of mental health challenges that stroke survivors and their loved ones may face such as anxiety, depression, anger, stress, loneliness, grief and loss.

When asked what difference the Wellbeing After Stroke Project makes to people's lives, service users told us:

“It provides a much needed outlet for stroke survivors, carers, of which I am both, providing support for a wide variety of problems people struggle with after stroke.”

And

“Massive difference! Having a stroke is a traumatic thing! When you go through a trauma like this, people don't understand, talking to the WASP Counsellors helps you think differently and that's what you need.”



Overcoming Loneliness

Loneliness does not come from having no people around, but from being unable to communicate the things that are important to you




Do you find yourself feeling lonely or isolated after a stroke or brain injury?

Join us for our BRAND NEW Group Course
Mondays 1pm - 3pm
Starting 01/06/26 for 8 weeks
email rachel@nptmind.org.uk
call 07541760872





Life After Stroke / Brain Injury...The Journey Forward

An 8-week course looking at the different feelings and emotions that may arise because of a stroke/brain injury. Topics covered include Grief and Loss, Anger, Frustration and Acceptance, Mindfulness and Relaxation.

Email rachel@nptmind.org.uk
 Call 07541760872







Healing the Trauma of Stroke and Brain Injury

A Safe and Supportive Space to explore the emotional trauma experienced by stroke and brain injury survivors.



The Course Covers:

- Understanding Brain Recovery
- Emotional Regulation
- Identity Changes
- Resilience & Mental Recovery

To reserve a space:
 07541760872
rachel@nptmind.org.uk







Psycho-educational Group Courses

Over the year 55 stroke survivors, carers and family members have attended one or more of our psycho-educational group courses.

Over the 3 year lifespan of the project 158 individuals accessed a psycho-educational group course and/or workshop.

The Project Group Facilitators delivered the original Life After Stroke, The Journey Forward Course, as well as the courses developed by them in years 1 and 2—The Power of Speech, My Recovery Story, Spring Clean Your Life and Acceptance After Stroke. The Facilitators also designed and delivered a further 2 new pilot courses. The first pilot course named 'Healing the Trauma of Stroke and Brain Injury' was designed using feedback from previous group attendees that they wanted to learn more about trauma and the effects it has on the body and mind, from a stroke/brain injury specific perspective. The second pilot course named 'Overcoming Loneliness' was also designed using feedback received about the loss of friendships after a stroke/brain injury, and the impact loneliness has on emotional wellbeing.

When asked if the Wellbeing After Stroke Project had made a difference to their lives, we heard:

"It's Given me hope - there is no other facility for stroke survivors which allows you to talk to others and share experiences, whilst also looking at wellbeing."

And

"I have shared my fears and difficulties with people who understand my condition. I don't shy away from how I feel here, I know I won't be told to "pull myself together," or "get over it".

Involving people in the Community

The NPT WASP team have continuously encouraged service users to provide feedback on the support that NPT WASP offers, in order to continuously adapt and improve the support that we offer. The information provided has been the motivating factor for development of new branches of support the project offers such as a Befriending service, which has been a lifeline for those service users who do not feel that Talking Therapies are the right fit for them, however do struggle with loneliness after their stroke.

Each individual accessing the Project has the opportunity to complete a service evaluation form, highlighting what is working well and areas for improvement or development.

The project has also benefitted from an Independent Evaluation, where individuals were invited to participate in interviews sharing their experience of receiving support from the project. The Independent Evaluator also developed an anonymous online survey whereby individuals accessing the project could share their experiences.

We have strived to embed our work within the wider community, involving other organisations such as NPT Carers Service, Stroke Hub Wales, Local Area Coordinators and the Stroke Association by inviting them to attend our drop-in group, where they have been able to share information with our service users and offer additional support. The team also visited multiple venues across the breadth of Neath Port Talbot offering information and referral support to those wanting to access the project.

The image shows a screenshot of the NPT WASP website and a testimonial card. The website header is blue with the 'Wellbeing After Stroke Project' logo and 'NPT WASP' text. Below the header, it says 'Take the survey for...' with two buttons: 'Stroke survivors' and 'Family members / carers'. The testimonial card is purple with a white box containing five gold stars, a quote from a stroke survivor, and the text 'Stroke Survivor'. At the bottom of the card are logos for NPT WASP, Mind, Neath Port Talbot, and the Stroke Association.

Wellbeing After Stroke Project
NPT WASP

Take the survey for...

Stroke survivors Family members / carers

★★★★★

"It has changed my life. Before I had nothing but despair. Now I have friends, support and a life."

Stroke Survivor

NPT WASP Mind Neath Port Talbot Stroke Association

Involving people in the Community

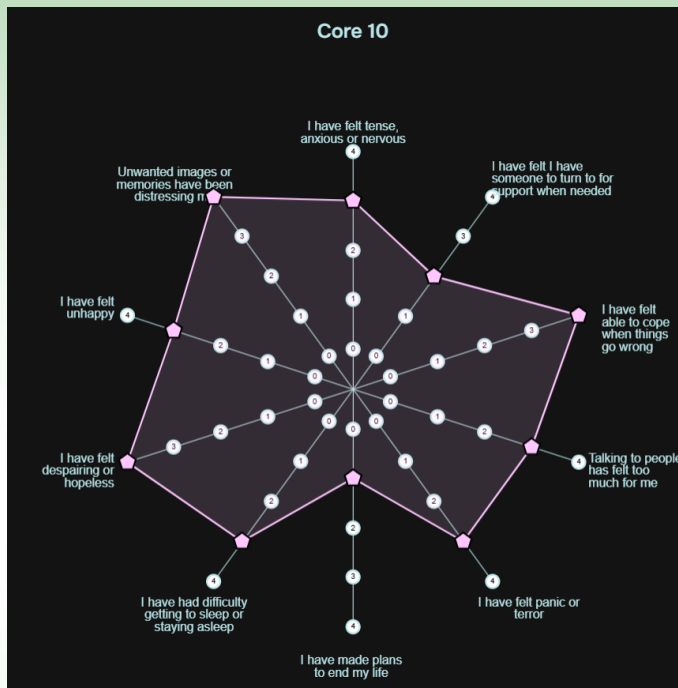


In addition to inviting other organisations into our groups, we have continued to provide information sessions for other Third Sector and Statutory Services in order to raise awareness of the project to Professionals, allowing them an opportunity to become familiar with the support available from NPT WASP and ask questions to deepen their understanding. These information sessions have been provided for various groups such as Morriston Hospital Acute Stroke Ward, Valley Stroke Support Group, Neath Port Talbot Community Occupational Therapists, Morriston Brain Injury Service, Neath Port Talbot Headway, Neath Port Talbot Hospital Neuro-rehabilitation Unit, NPT Hospital Stroke Ward and the Early Stroke Discharge Team. These sessions proved to be invaluable in building relationships with relevant local services and how we can work together to provide the best possible support for the beneficiaries.



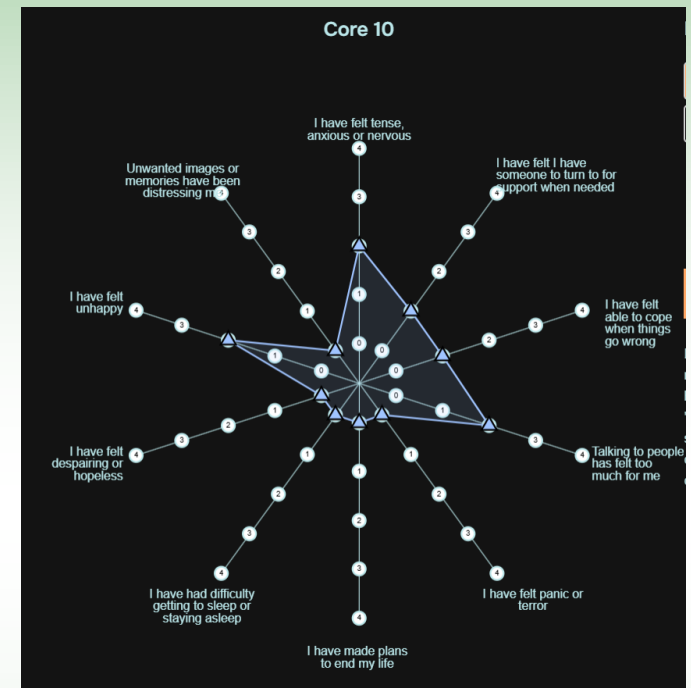
NPT WASP has also maintained a presence at Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group throughout the entirety of the project, in order to reach those stroke survivors and their families who have been discharged from NHS stroke services for quite sometime, who do still require support with their emotional wellbeing. Being able to deliver wellbeing sessions for the group members and gently introduce them to the idea of mental health support at a time that is right for them as individuals has proven to be a successful way to support the community.

The Difference NPT WASP is Making



BEFORE

AFTER



During its third year, Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing After Stroke Project has continued to make a significant impact in the lives of stroke survivors and their loved ones in the community. This statement is based upon the varied ways in which we are able to demonstrate the differences made.

When an individual chooses to engage in support from NPT WASP, whether this be for counselling, supported self help or a psycho-educational group course, we collect data by utilising outcome measure tools, such as Core10, the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (SWEMWBS), the Generalised Anxiety Disorder Questionnaire (GAD-7) and the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9). These tools are able to demonstrate in a quantitative format the difference in service users' wellbeing from the point of referral into the project to the point of completion of support.

Above is an example of a service user's reduction in psychological distress following receiving support from the project. The first chart shows the service user's CORE10 scoring at point of referral into the project, whilst the second chart shows the comparison to the service user's scoring following the completion of Counselling. This service user initially scored 30 on the scale, which is defined as Severe Distress. Following completion of support the service user scored 8, which is defined as Low Distress.

Outcome Measure Averages

Over the Duration of the year we collated the following data:

Core 10

84% of service users saw a decrease in their score this year, which signifies a decrease in their psychological distress. This Percentage of service users has been consistent across the lifespan of the project, recorded as 87% in Year 1 and 81% in Year 2.

The average starting score this year was 20 which is categorised as Moderate to Severe Distress.

The average ending score this year was 13 which is categorised as Mild Distress.

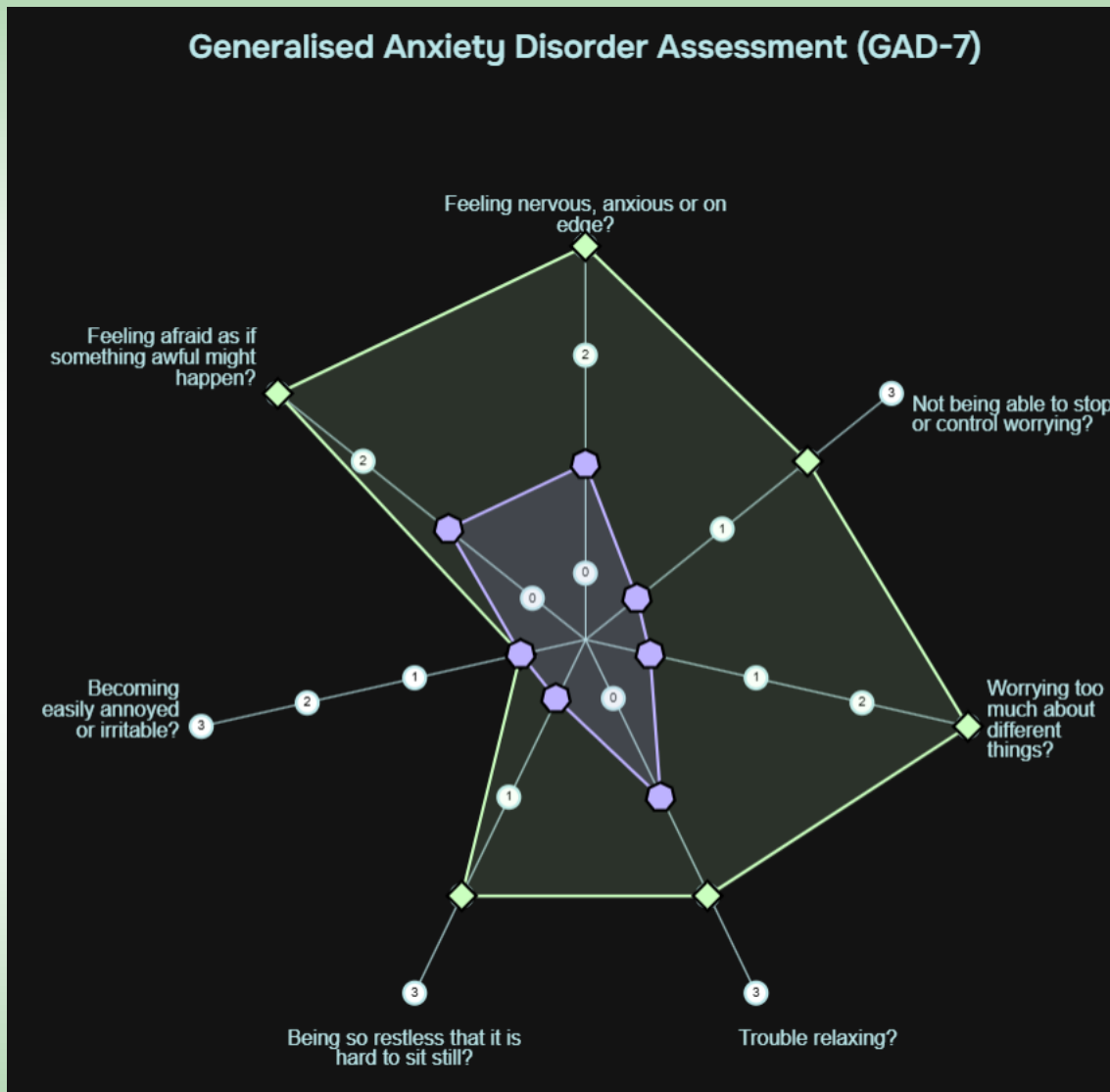
GAD-7

90% of service users saw a decrease in their score this year, which signifies a decrease in their level of anxiety.

Over the lifespan of the project, this was recorded as 81% in Year 1 and 76% in Year 2. Highlighting a more significant impact in Year 3.

The average starting score this year was 13 which is categorised as Moderate Anxiety.

The average ending score this year was 8 which is categorised as Mild Anxiety.



SWEMWEBS

75% of service users this year saw an increase in their score which signifies an increase in their emotional wellbeing.

Over the lifespan of the project, this was recorded as 84% in Year 1 and 80% in Year 2.

The average starting score this year was 19 which is categorised as Mild Depression.

The average ending score this year was 24 which is categorised as Reasonably Positive Emotional Wellbeing.

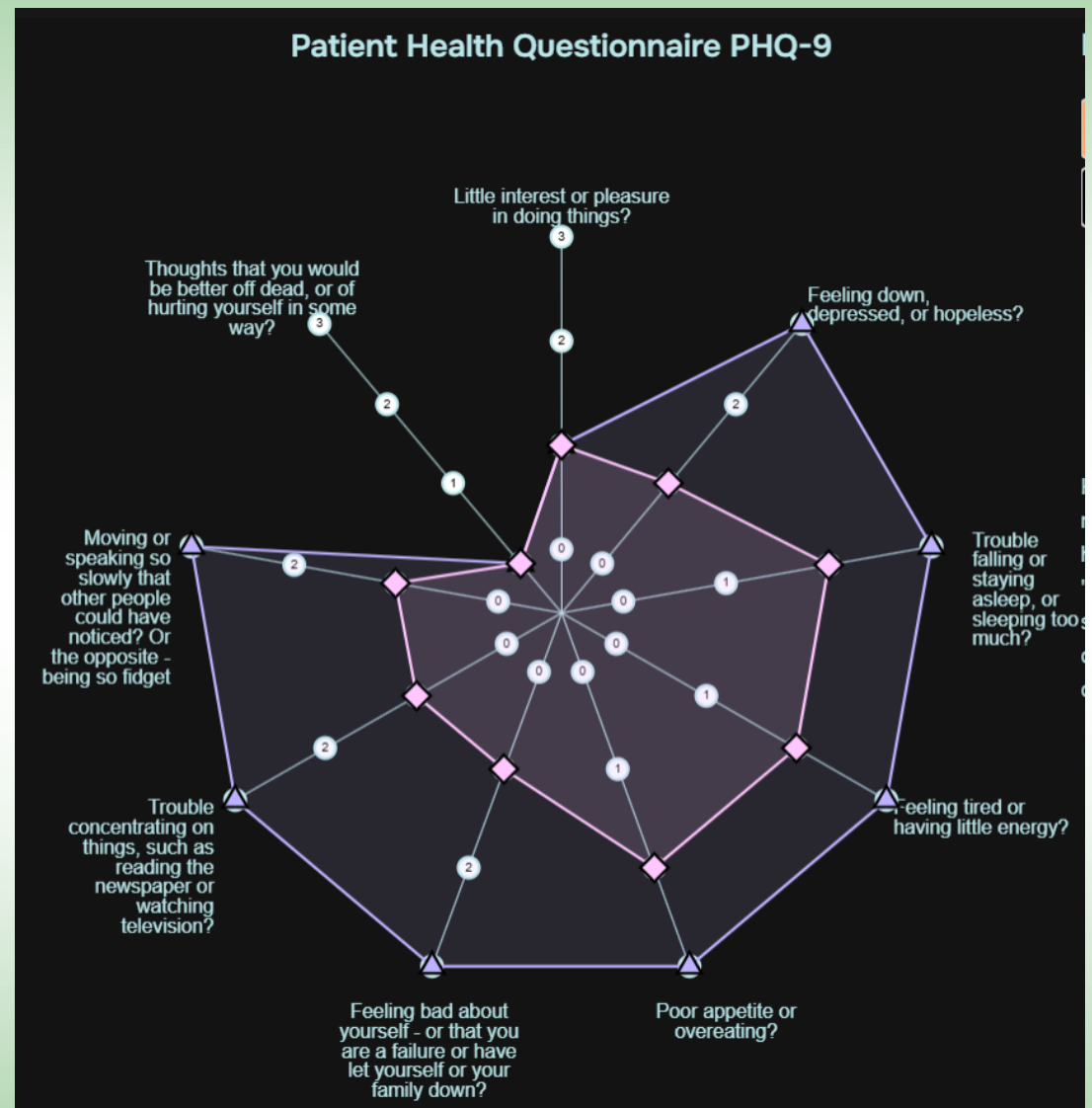
PHQ-9

82% of service users this year saw a decrease in their score which signifies a decrease in their level of depression.

Over the lifespan of the project, this was recorded as 88% in Year 1 and 73% in Year 2.

The average starting score this year was 15 which is categorised as Moderately Severe Depression.

The average ending score this year was 9 which is categorised as Mild Depression.





Expansion of Data Collection

During Year 3 the Independent Evaluator conducted a series of interviews with service users, external services and organisations, Trustees from our Partnership and Project Staff. This data was collected and integrated into the Independent Evaluation Report provided separately to this document.

The Independent Evaluator also developed an anonymous online survey, whereby service users could share their experiences of accessing support from the Project. This data has been finalised in a separate report.



NPT WASP Service Evaluation

Counselling Service Evaluations

In order to collect qualitative data from the perspective of individuals accessing the project, service users were asked to complete service evaluation questionnaires upon completion of accessing Talking Therapies. These questionnaires allow the voices of stroke survivors, their family members and carers to reflect their thoughts and feelings on the importance and impact of Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing After Stroke Project.

Within the Service Evaluations we were told:

“It’s been great having help to work through the difficult times I was going through with someone who is professionally trained and can listen to what type of help I need and how I need it adjusted because of the affect the stroke has had on my mental processing and memory. This type of support was needed, and I felt someone really cared to listen to what I needed and followed through on their promises so I could access the counselling help.”

“I feel like a different person and I don't think I would go back to the version of myself before. I am now more calm, present and my mind is clearer. The stroke was such a heavy pull on me, it made me sad, angry and frustrated. I have been able to let go of those feelings that were holding me back and I am now more calm, more present and my mind is clearer. I have been able to prioritise and choose what I want for me and my life because I had a safe space in counselling to work things out. Until I had this safe space I couldn't know what was going on for me or what was coming next. For the first time in years I feel calm and in the moment.”

“It's made me come to term with what's happened to me, and helped me realise that life can continue, and doesn't have to end when there's been a stroke.”

When asked What (if any) difference has Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing After Stroke Project made to YOUR life, we received responses such as:

"I didn't want to share and be vulnerable. I wasn't sure if it would help me. I was able to feel safe in counselling and share things I'd never shared with anyone before. The more I opened up the better I felt."

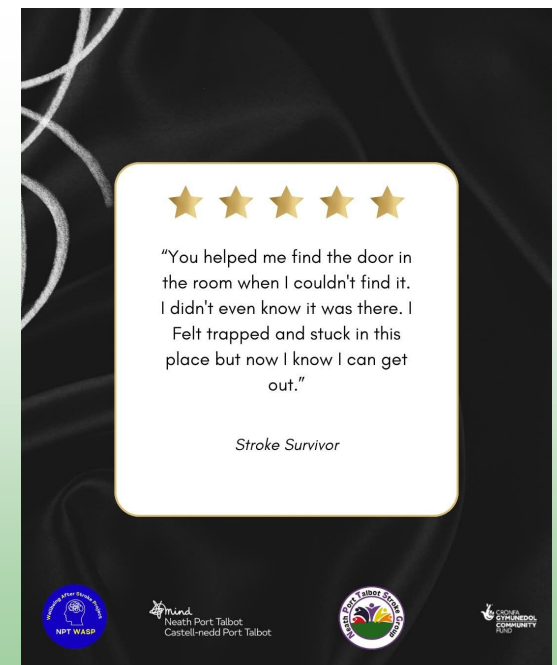
"You've wrapped me in care. Where would I be without you."

"You helped me find the door in the room when I couldn't find it. I didn't even know it was there. Felt trapped and stuck in this place but now I know I can get out."

Over the 3 year lifespan of the project, when asked to give the score between 1 and 10, 1 being very poor, 10 being excellent, 87.5% of service users scored NPT WASP 8 out of 10 or Higher.

The majority of service users felt that there was nothing that could be done to improve the project.

Some suggestions for improvements included the project providing a larger amount of sessions, increasing the size of the team to further speed up access to support, services being available evenings/weekends and the team making every effort to ensure the Project continues past its' initial 3 years.





Psycho-Educational Group Course Evaluations

When asked what difference they felt NPT WASP makes to people, we received responses such as:

"It gives people hope and a voice."

"It provides the after care and help post stroke that is simply not available once discharged from care. Provides clarity and support, a place to turn to when you feel a bit lost or need help."

"It gives comfort and understanding in a secure environment."

When asked What (if any) difference has Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing After Stroke Project made to YOUR life, we received responses such as:

"As a carer I have been uplifted by talking and listening to the facilitators."

"Given a renewed sense of belonging, a feeling of being welcomed and understood."

"It has changed my life. Before I had nothing but despair. Now I have friends, support and a life."

"It's allowed me to refocus on life priorities, bring acceptance into what has happened and provide guidance and options on ways going forward."

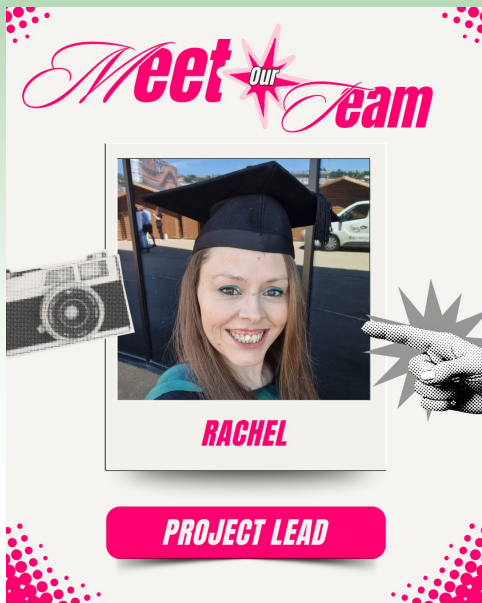
"It's given me support which I couldn't find from any other source. I've gained knowledge and understanding and can relate to other stroke survivors."

When asked to give the score between 1 and 10, 1 being very poor, 10 being excellent, 98% of service users scored NPT WASP 9 out of 10 or higher. The majority of service users felt that there were no improvements that could be made to the service.

A suggestion for improvement was to continue developing and delivering more new courses.

100% of service users stated that they would recommend the service to others.

Staff Feedback



Project Lead Rachel stated *"The past 3 years have been a whirlwind! It has been a privilege to Lead such a fantastic team of dedicated staff. The partnership between Neath Port Talbot Mind and Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group has been a wonderful example of combining expertise to deliver a quality service. The increase in service users year on year shows the overwhelming need for such a service. The most significant message that we as a team have learned and promote to others is to have Hope...there is life after stroke."*



Group Facilitator Steve stated *"From the very first day who would have predicted the phenomenal success of the WASP Project. For me, the project has grown organically with every group evolving to the point, that when we repeat a group, it is never the same as the first. We are often told, that because we create such a safe space for them, it allows them to open up and share some of those more difficult feelings without being judged. All groups that I have facilitated have always been productive, in some cases, life changing and fun."*

Our attendees have always said that they wouldn't know what to do without WASP. For some, it is a life-line and for others it's like a safety net they can return to for a top-up, when life starts to get a little overwhelming. This project is going to be sorely missed, not just by those who have and already attend our groups, but also by those who have yet to find us, as there is no project out there like this one. To lose this for those who survive a stroke or brain injury makes me feel so sad.

This project works, it is needed and we are sad it's come to an end, but extremely proud of what we have achieved."

Staff Feedback

Talking Therapies Practitioner Yein Stated *"It has been an absolute pleasure being part of the WASP project over these last three years. Having the opportunity to journey alongside those impacted by the effects of stroke has been a real privilege, and I'm so grateful to work alongside such a brilliant team."*

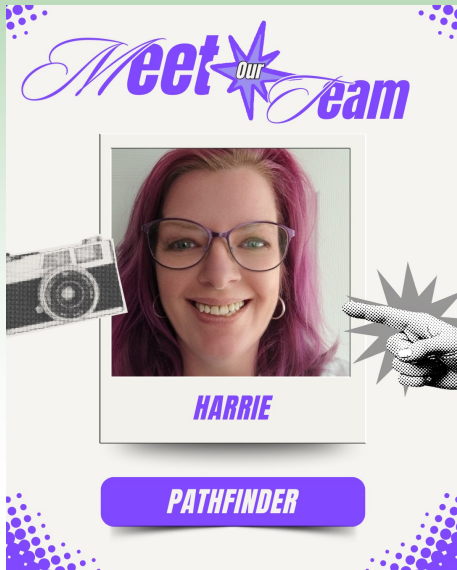
The work we have done has been truly significant, as we have supported and offered hope to many people in rediscovering themselves and finding their way forward."



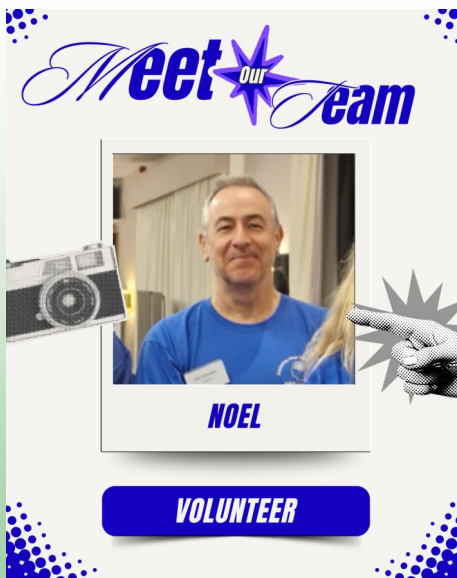
Group Facilitator Angharad stated *"Never did I think that I would meet such inspirational people (survivors and carers) who, despite their own struggles, are always happy and ready to help and support others. This coupled with the absolute privilege it has been working with the WASP team has been a highlight of my working life so far.. long may it continue!"*



Staff Feedback



Pathfinder Harrie stated *"Over the past three years, the Wellbeing After Stroke Project has made such a difference to so many lives, and I feel incredibly lucky to be part of it. Seeing our clients—and their families—grow in confidence, independence, and optimism has been genuinely uplifting. Every day brings new moments that remind me why this work matters so much: the laughter, the small milestones, and the way people support each other through setbacks and successes. None of this would be possible without the incredible team around me—their compassion, creativity, and willingness to go the extra mile for our clients makes all the difference. Being Pathfinder for such a unique and forward-thinking project has been both a privilege and a joy. I'm grateful for the chance to learn from and work alongside such a dedicated team, and, most of all, for the trust our clients have placed in us as they navigate life after stroke."*



Volunteer Noel stated *"As a stroke survivor the Wellbeing After Stroke Project has been absolutely critical in my recovery over the last two years leading to much better personal health outcomes. As a volunteer with the project I have both experienced and witnessed the unique, essential support and guidance for survivors and carers that is not readily available in standard care. The expert staff provide a critical need in filling a major gap in local health and social support, both for survivors and family carers. I feel fortunate to have benefited from the varied range of services within the project; undoubtedly without which I would not be in the position of improved physical and mental health and now being able to volunteer with the project."*

Renewed funding would ensure future survivors do not face isolation and the project would continue to protect community wellbeing."



Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group Trustee Feedback

Maureen— *“Life as a Carer is very hard and can be isolating, overwhelming and consuming. Having WASP has been a breath of fresh air. Their group sessions have allowed carers to take stock and re-evaluate and understand their fantastic contribution they are giving on a daily basis. Without WASP I would have crumbled along with a number of my fellow carers. Their sessions are very much needed.”*

Paul— *“The WASP project has been a breath of fresh air for Stroke and Brain Injury survivors in our area, especially Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group. The support that has been given to Stroke survivors their families and carers is second to none and has transformed lives, has improved the well-being of at least 1000 people and has definitely saved the lives of the people that have been through the project. Some have accessed many parts, some have had a light touch experience of maybe just one aspect but everybody has benefited from the kind, caring, professional and empathetic approach of all the team members. This has definitely been aided by the team having expert knowledge about Stroke and brain injury relayed to them by Stroke Group, this has made a big difference as the Team understand Stroke and brain injury and come from a place of knowledge and this allows empathy which makes such a difference. The project has improved lives, improved well-being, improved self-worth, taught coping mechanisms that can last a lifetime, changed peoples outlook on life and saved lives, not only for the Stroke survivors and Brain Injury survivors but for their families and carers, WASP has been the total solution and I thank the team massively for all their hard work thank you very much.”*

Emma— *“Being discharged from hospital after a stroke and now having a disability is absolutely terrifying. There is no support and guidance that you can rely on and often after suffering a stroke you are cognitively unable to search out help.*

Having WASP as a complete wrap around service from hospital bedside to getting home is a totally unique service that instantly lifts fears and gives you someone to talk to and share your fears and support you and your family to rebuild your life.

I have loved the way that WASP has listened to our clients needs over the years and developed the service for them. The team have made an incredible project, bespoke and intuitive for their beneficiaries. It's unique just like all of the clients needs.”

Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group

Trustee Feedback

Tina— *“The Wellbeing After Stroke Project (WASP) has been invaluable to the Stroke survivors and their Carers. As a volunteer and now a Trustee with the NPTSG I have witnessed the huge impact your team have had to individuals. The activities, support and kindness shown have been exceptional.*

I have been in the medical profession for over 40 years and used to supporting patients and relatives during very stressful situations but the day I lost my dad, after suffering a massive bleed on the brain, I felt lost and unable to cope. I was supported by your counselling team and found it so helpful to allow me to gather my thoughts and talk through my grief.

Your team have helped supported and delivered an exceptional service to myself and other members of the NPTSG and I wish you all the best for the future of the WASP team.”



Helena— *“The Wellbeing After Stroke Project (WASP) has had a significant positive impact on my wellbeing and my ability to sustain my caring role. Caring can be an isolating, overwhelming, and demanding responsibility, particularly when balancing employment and supporting two stroke survivors. The support provided through WASP has helped reduce this sense of isolation and has provided practical and emotional support at a time when it was most needed.*

The regular group sessions have created valuable opportunities for carers to reflect on their experiences, share challenges, and recognise the important contribution they make on a daily basis. These sessions have improved my confidence, resilience, and ability to manage the ongoing pressures associated with caring.

Access to counselling through the project has been particularly beneficial. It has provided a safe and supportive space to explore the emotional impact of caring and develop coping strategies that have supported both my wellbeing and my ability to continue in my caring role. Without this support, I believe my own health and wellbeing would have deteriorated significantly.

The consistency of the weekly WASP presence has also been a key strength of the service. Having a regular and trusted point of contact has ensured that carers and stroke survivors remain connected to support, information, and wider services when needed. This continuity has helped build trust and encouraged ongoing engagement.

Overall, WASP has delivered meaningful outcomes for carers by improving wellbeing, reducing isolation, increasing resilience, and helping individuals sustain their caring responsibilities. Based on my experience, this is an essential service that provides significant value to both carers and stroke survivors, brain injury survivors and demonstrates the importance of continued funding.”



Ian Hutchinson—Trustee: *As a Trustee of Neath Port Talbot Mind, I would like to recognise what has been achieved through the Wellbeing After Stroke Project (WASP) and, most importantly, thank everyone who has contributed to its success.*

WASP was created through the partnership between Neath Port Talbot Mind and Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group, with funding from The National Lottery Community Fund. It brought together Mind's mental health expertise with the Stroke Group's invaluable lived experience of stroke. The idea behind the project was relatively simple but addressed a major gap: recovery from stroke is about much more than physical rehabilitation. Stroke can affect someone's confidence, identity, relationships and emotional wellbeing, while family members can suddenly become carers and experience significant changes to their own lives.

WASP responded by providing a range of connected support including counselling, supported self-help, Pathfinder advice and signposting, psycho-educational courses, wellbeing sessions, befriending, workshops and, increasingly, hospital outreach. The response demonstrated just how much this service was needed. By the end of the first two years, 867 individuals had been supported against a target of 580 – almost 50% above target. This included 416 stroke survivors, 222 carers and 229 family members. Demand continued into Year 3. During its first six months alone, another 415 people who were new to WASP received support, alongside 194 people continuing to access the project from previous years. More important than the numbers is the difference that support has made.

The independent evaluation found improvements in wellbeing for the majority of people measured and described WASP as providing a safe space where survivors could process trauma, grief and anxiety, rebuild confidence and reduce isolation. The experience of one service user perhaps says more than any statistic:

“It has changed my life. Before I had nothing but despair. Now I have friends, support and a life.”

One of the most important lessons from WASP has also been recognising the impact of stroke on carers and families. Demand from these groups was considerably greater than originally anticipated. The project has given them somewhere to talk about their own experiences, obtain practical support and recognise that their wellbeing matters too. Hospital outreach has been another particularly positive development, enabling WASP to meet survivors and families before discharge and reassure them that support will be available when they are ready for it.



Ian Hutchinson—Trustee: *For me, one of the greatest strengths of WASP has been partnership working. Neath Port Talbot Mind brought mental health expertise; Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group brought lived experience and an understanding of what life following stroke is actually like. Health, social care and voluntary-sector partners have subsequently become part of a wider network around the project. WASP has also been willing to listen and change. Workshops, befriending, hospital outreach and other developments were introduced in response to what people using the service told us they needed. There are lessons for the future. Demand demonstrates the need for greater capacity. Transport and mobility remain barriers for some people. Families and carers need continued dedicated support, and there are opportunities to develop provision further for people such as younger stroke survivors.*

Most importantly, the end of a funded project should not mean the end of its learning.

WASP has demonstrated the value of combining mental health expertise, stroke lived experience, practical assistance, therapeutic intervention, peer support and strong partnership working.

I would therefore like to offer my sincere thanks to everyone involved: the WASP team; our colleagues at Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group; its Trustees, members and volunteers; Neath Port Talbot Mind staff and Trustees; our health, social care and third-sector partners; and, above all, the stroke survivors, carers and family members who placed their trust in the project.

I would also like to record our sincere gratitude to The National Lottery Community Fund. Without its support, WASP and the difference it has made would not have been possible.

As a Trustee, I am very proud of what has been achieved collectively.

WASP has shown that emotional and mental health support should not be an afterthought following stroke. It should be recognised as an important part of recovery.

That is a valuable legacy for Neath Port Talbot and, potentially, for stroke services much further afield.

External Organisations / Services Feedback

Ceri Eady (Swansea Bay Health Board—Clinical stroke nurse specialist)

“In the absence of dedicated stroke psychology services within the health board, the work of NPT WASP is indispensable. It offers a unique, community-based approach that bridges the gap between clinical care and emotional support—something that is currently lacking in many healthcare pathways. Without continued funding, stroke survivors and their families risk losing a vital lifeline at a time when they are most vulnerable.

NPT WASP plays a crucial role in addressing this unmet need. By providing a supportive, understanding environment, it enables stroke survivors and their families to share experiences, rebuild confidence, and develop coping strategies in a way that is both accessible and meaningful. Importantly, the project recognises that recovery is not solely physical; psychological recovery is equally essential for long-term wellbeing and quality of life.”

Dr Jess Williams (Patient Public Involvement Lead-Stroke Hub Wales)

“The NPT WASP programme exemplifies the type of Innovative, community-focused support that is needed to improve long-term outcomes after stroke. Its commitment to holistic rehabilitation, co-production and equitable access has made a meaningful difference to those it serves. Stroke Hub Wales is proud to support this work and hopes to see the programme continue to grow as a model of best practice for neurological rehabilitation across Wales.”

Sian Huxtable (Swansea Bay Health Board—Occupational Therapist Morriston Hospital)

“The Wellbeing After Stroke Project is invaluable. Providing early advice and information is reassuring to both patients and their families, so that they know help and support available to them whenever they feel ready to access it.”

External Organisations / Services Feedback

Tony Potts—Executive Director Neath Port Talbot Community Voluntary Service

“The Wellbeing After Stroke Project (WASP) has proven to be an invaluable referral agency for Neath Port Talbot Community Voluntary Service, particularly for our Health, Social Care and Wellbeing services. The project provides advice, information and support to individuals, family members, and staff. Our Community Wellbeing Service, which support patients at the point of hospital discharge, refers those affected by stroke ensuring they are supported through a life changing event. Similarly, our Social Prescribing Service will refer patients whose emotional health wellbeing has been impacted by stroke, and our Unpaid Carers Service promotes the project to family members who are providing unpaid care for loved ones impacted by stroke. The partnership between NPT Mind and Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group has been instrumental in the success of the WASP project. Mental health and wellbeing officers have worked alongside individuals and families with lived expertise to deliver a person-centred approach which addresses the increasing number of strokes in our communities due to our ageing population and changing demographics.”

Rowan Parker—Mind Cymru

The Wellbeing After Stroke Project has delivered valuable mental health and wellbeing support to stroke survivors and their families, demonstrating the value of strong local partnership working between Neath Port Talbot Mind and the Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group.

The project has also contributed to learning across the Mind Federation and supported the development of new resources, such as the guided self-help resource on long-term health conditions.

Sinead Sweet (Swansea Bay Health Board—Senior Physiotherapist NPT Hospital)

WASP have been a welcoming presence on our ward. According to the stroke association, around a third of stroke survivors experience post-stroke depression, and 20% will suffer from emotionalism within six months of their stroke. In addition, healthcare costs for patients with long-term conditions, who also have depression, are typically 45% higher than those without. Unfortunately, our stroke survivors do not currently have access to formal psychology input, so having WASP on the ward is valuable in ensuring that patient’s mental health and well-being is addressed. We have had positive feedback from patients that they have enjoyed talking to the WASP team, and it is reassuring for them to know that there are services to support their mental wellbeing on discharge should they need it.

External Organisations / Services Feedback

**Dr David Abankwa—Swansea Bay Health Board
Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine based in the
Neurological Rehabilitation Unit (NRU) in Neath Port
Talbot hospital)**

I am a Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine based in Neath Port Talbot hospital. My role involves providing support for people who have experienced a stroke medically and from a rehabilitation perspective.

Over the last three years our patients have benefitted immensely from the input provided by the project. We have received excellent feedback from our patients about the benefit they derive from it.

The team on the Neuro Rehab Unit in Neath Port Talbot Hospital are very grateful for the practical support provided by WASP to our patients on discharge from the unit.

**Rebekah Price—Neurological Music Therapist—Music
For Joy**

“Having collaborated with the Wellbeing After Stroke Project (WASP) to provide Music Therapy sessions, I have seen firsthand that the project provides a vital safe space and support network. Rachel Diplock and her team work tirelessly to provide essential opportunities that significantly enhance recovery and improve the quality of life for individuals recovering from a stroke or brain injury. This is an indispensable service that continues to make a profound impact.”

External Organisations / Services Feedback

Stephen Kinnock—MP for Aberafan / Maesteg and Secretary of State for Wales

“The support and care provided by NPT Wellbeing After Stroke to stroke survivors, their families and friends has been truly invaluable. Over the last three years, the organisation has helped hundreds of people access the help, support and connections they need following a stroke. A stroke can change a life in an instant and have a devastating impact, bringing emotional, mental health and wellbeing challenges that affect not only the individual but also their loved ones. NPT Wellbeing After Stroke has made a profound difference to the lives of those who have accessed its services, helping people feel less isolated, more connected and better equipped to face the challenges of recovery. Through their dedication and compassion, NPT Wellbeing After Stroke has empowered people to rebuild their lives with confidence, resilience and hope.”

Lynn Preece—Stroke Association Service Delivery Lead for Wales

“A recent survey conducted by the Stroke Association found that around three quarters of stroke survivors experience at least one mental health problem following a stroke, yet only 3% received support when they needed it the most. Currently, there is little specialised support available in Wales to help stroke survivors address their mental health.

As a Stroke Association stroke recovery service serving the Swansea Bay health board area, we value being able to refer stroke survivors to this specialist mental health support to stroke survivors and carers when they need specialist help.

Quote from David Jones Stroke Association Coordinator and Stroke survivor In Swansea Bay:

“The stroke survivors I have referred have all reported that they have found it a huge benefit, and the groups they have been part of have been a great help.

Personally, I feel that the project should continue to run, having been through the journey myself and having someone explaining why I was having certain feelings and thoughts, was invaluable to me.

So, I am glad that we have an organisation we can signpost / refer into to help stroke survivors.”



Testimonial Video

The most true reflection of the impact that Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing After Stroke Project has had on the lives of stroke survivors, their carers and family members comes from their own heartfelt words and testimonies.

Please scan the QR Code to the left which will take you to NPT WASP's Promotional Video.

Group Course Video

We are often asked by service members what they can expect from a NPT WASP Group Course. This video gives a Fly on The Wall look into a Recent Group Course run by the project.

Please scan the QR Code to the right which will take you to NPT WASP's Stroke, My Story Video.



Counselling Case Study

A female stroke survivor in her 40s came to counselling due to struggling with severe feelings of self-hatred, overwhelming anger, and negative feelings about her life, which made her feel hopeless. She also shared that, due to ongoing health difficulties, she was struggling to get enough sleep. Early in our work together, we explored how sleep deprivation could negatively affect her mood, normalising how difficult it can be to cope with strong emotions when feeling exhausted. By recognising this, we began to make room for her to show greater understanding and self-compassion towards herself. Over time, this gradually enabled her to change the way she responded to herself when experiencing difficulties.

As we spoke more about her overwhelming feelings, she described them as a sadness that completely took over. This led us to explore her experience using a counselling approach known as "parts work." This approach suggests that we all have different "parts" within ourselves that can show up in different situations, meaning there can be different ways in which we think, feel, and respond based on our experiences. The client found this helped her realise that the overwhelming sadness she experienced was a part of herself that she despised because it prevented her from living the life she wanted. She also recognised that she kept herself as busy as possible to avoid these feelings. However, because she experienced fatigue following her stroke, this often left her exhausted and feeling trapped by her sadness once again.

Over time, she began to see her sadness as an isolated part of herself that had been carrying emotional pain for a long time. Rather than trying to avoid or push it away, she gradually learned to approach it with curiosity so that she could better understand and support it. This allowed her to experience her sadness without it taking over in the way it had previously. This became one of the turning points in her counselling. As our sessions continued, she began to recognise that both positive and negative experiences could coexist, and that she could acknowledge both with a greater sense of openness. She was able to speak about her challenges without the sadness overwhelming her in the way it had before, and a genuine sense of gratitude towards her life overall began to emerge. She started to engage with life not to avoid her sadness. This helped her recognise when she needed to rest, rather than pushing herself beyond her limits. In turn, this contributed to improvements in both her mood and her sleep.

Later in our work, she reflected on how her self-criticism had developed from experiences earlier in her life. She also recognised that the self-compassion we had been developing together had helped her cultivate greater warmth and kindness towards herself. By the end of our sessions, she felt that her relationship with herself had changed significantly. She had become much kinder towards herself and had developed tools that helped her respond to moments of difficulty more compassionately.

Initial Outcome Measures

CORE10: 21 (Moderate to Severe Distress)

GAD7: 12 (Moderate Anxiety)

SWEMWBS: 16 (Probable Depression or Anxiety)

PHQ9: 15 (Moderately Severe Depression)

Ending Outcome Measures

CORE10: 13 (Mild Distress)

GAD7: 4 (Minimal Anxiety)

SWEMWBS: 23 (Reasonably Positive Emotional Wellbeing)

PHQ9: 7 (Mild Depression)

Signposting Support Case Study

Presenting Issues: Female stroke survivor, looking for guidance around ability to drive, welfare rights, fitness to travel and ongoing medical care post-discharge from hospital.

Pathfinder interventions:

- Referral support to Rookwood Driving Assessment centre.
- Support for DVLA Driving License Application.
- Referral to Age Connects – Blue Badge Application & Attendance Allowance review.
- Identify which hospital/ medical team is providing continuing care post-discharge. – Was an inpatient at 4 hospitals, with no clear follow-up pathway on discharge.
- Referral to Stroke Association – Information for holidays, flying & Travel Insurance.
- Signposted to Highways England – Sunflower Stickers for car.

WASP Support Identified

- WASP Signposting
- WASP Counselling
- WASP Survivor Psycho-educational Course - Healing From Trauma of Stroke & Brain Injury
- WASP Wellbeing Workshops—Harpist, Calligraphy.

Outcomes

- Medical consultant, team & hospital identified for post-stroke care.
- Driving Assessment completed & passed
- Driving License reinstated.
- Car Sunflower sticker identifies that a user needs extra support.
- 3-year blue badge successfully obtained.
- Attendance Allowance checked & updated to a 3-year award.
- Counselling completed.
- Survivor group completed

Direct Quote & Feedback

“I just want to express my thanks; everything you have done has really made a difference to me and my recovery. I did not know who to ask, and you came along and had all the answers – Thank you, Harrie.”

“The WASP counselling has really made a difference to me, and just what I needed.”

Group Course Case Study

Client A was an independent, healthy person who had a career and an active social life. They are a parent to 2 young-adult aged children who still live at home.

Client A was diagnosed with a brain tumour after being repeatedly told by doctors that they were suffering with migraines. During their recovery client A began experiencing seizures. They were subsequently diagnosed with post-operative epilepsy and commenced anti-epileptic medication.

At the point of referral client A was experiencing seizures quite frequently, and as a result had to have 24hr monitoring by their family, was unable to drive and unable to return to work.

The client alluded to experiencing constant anxiety surrounding the possibility of future seizures due to their unpredictability. They also shared their feelings of low mood, loss of confidence, feelings of frustration and embarrassment, loss of independence, grief over the loss of their previous identity, reduced self-esteem, fear of being left alone following seizure episodes and increased irritability, particularly when fatigued.

How They Appeared When They Started:

Client A's presentation reflected both the neurological consequences of acquired brain injury and the emotional impact of life-changing illness.

The client alluded to experiencing constant anxiety surrounding the possibility of future seizures due to their unpredictability. They also shared their feelings of low mood, loss of confidence, feelings of frustration and embarrassment, loss of independence, grief over the loss of their previous identity, reduced self-esteem, fear of being left alone following seizure episodes and increased irritability, particularly when fatigued.

The consequences of client A's illness were profound. Although relieved that

the tumour had been successfully removed, they described feeling that they had "survived the tumour but lost the person I used to be."

How They Appeared When They Finished:

Over the 8 weeks Client A reported that the support group became a valuable aspect of their ongoing rehabilitation. Although the client acknowledged that life had changed significantly since their illness, they described recovery not as returning to who they had been before, but as learning to build a meaningful life alongside the lasting effects of their brain injury and epilepsy. Their increased self-awareness, acceptance of support, and willingness to adapt enabled them to regain a sense of purpose and improve his overall quality of life despite the ongoing challenges.

Client A also demonstrated improved emotional regulation. They became more aware of the triggers of their anger and frustration and learned to respond with greater patience and self-compassion rather than self-criticism. This increased insight enabled them to cope more effectively with setbacks and reduced the impact of emotional distress on their daily life.

Outcome measures

Short Version Warwick-Edinburgh mental wellbeing scale

Start score = 18 (Possible Depression or Anxiety)

End score = 28 (High Wellbeing)

Direct quote

"NPT WASP gives you a voice, support and the freedom to just be yourself"

Workshop and Befriending Case Studies

How They Appeared When They Had Started:

Client B experienced three strokes over a short period. The strokes resulted in reduced mobility, weakness affecting their left side, impaired balance and coordination, and significant post-stroke fatigue. Despite rehabilitation improvements, fatigue remained their greatest challenge, often limiting their ability to complete everyday activities and reducing their confidence. The unpredictability of their fatigue caused frustration, this led to reduced participation in social activities and hobbies, contributing to feelings of isolation and a loss of independence.

How They Appeared When They Finished:

Client B attended a psychoeducational workshop on Living with Fatigue. The workshop explored the causes of post-stroke fatigue, the importance of pacing, recognising early signs of tiredness, prioritising activities, and balancing periods of activity with planned rest.

Through group discussions, Client B realised that fatigue was a common consequence of stroke rather than a sign of personal weakness or lack of motivation. Sharing experiences with other stroke/brain injury survivors helped normalise their symptoms and reduced feelings of frustration and self-blame. Client B also learned the importance of accepting support from family members while maintaining as much independence as possible. Client B described feeling more independent and better equipped to maintain their quality of life.

Outcome measures

Moodometer

Start score = 2 (fairly low)

End score = 4 (reasonably happy)

How they appeared when they started:

When I first engaged with this client, in Befriending sessions, they were extremely nervous and it was made clear to me that their trust in people was virtually non-existent. During our first call I had to repeat or rephrase a few questions, as their mind works on a 1-10 scale with positives and negatives.

How they appeared when they finished:

The weeks went by very quickly and our conversations just flowed. One week the client expressed that they didn't feel like talking as her dog was nearing the end of her life. As our conversation started, everything came pouring out and they were able to express their fears and emotions without feeling a burden, helped so much.

The client made it clear, that during our 12wks that they had found someone they could trust. Living with trauma and being able to talk was like a release valve.

Direct Quote

"When Steve finally told me that our sessions would be coming to an end, it hit me harder than I expected. I looked forward to our conversations and now it would leave me feeling lost again. I feel sad that something which made such a positive difference to my wellbeing, had to come to an end."

What have you learned?

What's gone well?

- Communication and promotion of NPT WASP within the community with third sector organisations, statutory services and community groups have continued to be positive, with good working relationships maintained, a clear referral pathway shared, and many of these organisations and groups making referrals into the project. Holding regular information sessions across the breadth of the County proved very successful in spreading awareness of the Project.
- Engagement with the Counselling service within NPT WASP has continued to be particularly successful, with many referrals received. The availability of Face to Face Counselling from 3 different locations across the County in addition to the option of remote sessions helps remove barriers to accessibility.
- Engagement in Signposting support with the project Pathfinder has been an in-demand branch of the project, with many service users learning of and being referred onto additional support within the community, improving the quality of their day to day lives and emotional wellbeing. This has particularly increased since the expansion of our Hospital Outreach work. The addition of a Volunteer to support the Pathfinder has had a positive impact on managing the demand.
- Service users engagement in the onward development of the project has continued to be successful. Service users are eager to be involved in helping to shape and develop the services offered by the project. The stand-alone workshops have been particularly successful, allowing service users to access mental health support and improve their wellbeing without an on-going commitment.
- Expanding Hospital Outreach visits to three different locations is capturing a substantial source of Stroke / Brain Injury Survivors and their loved ones prior to discharge from hospital, this highlights the benefit the project could achieve with a dedicated Hospital Outreach Worker. Individuals spoken to on the wards have welcomed the information shared with them about the project, and whilst some are ready to access support from the project within a short space of time, others are grateful to have the information ready for discharge when the time comes, which evidences the long-term and on-going need for the Project in the future.
- Working collaboratively with NPT Hospital Community Stroke Discharge Team to facilitate Multi-disciplinary appointments has been piloted with a patient going through hospital discharge, to introduce and encourage the ongoing community-based mental health support that NPT WASP can offer, as a preventative measure to avoid the individual reaching crisis point.
- The research and consultation with Organisations, survivors and loved ones of Brain Injury strengthened the Projects understanding of the similarities and differences faced by those impacted by brain injury, highlighted additions and adaptations that could be made to the support we offer to become more inclusive and inviting to a new cohort of beneficiaries and strengthened the application for funding to deliver a new project to support this demographic.

Challenges

- There have been further instances this year where numerous members of one family have chosen to access support from NPT WASP. This has continued to cause a challenge within the counselling service within NPT WASP, as the project has only 2 Talking Therapy Practitioners, and on occasions there have been three or more members of a family wanting to access counselling. In order to ensure that our counsellors are working ethically, to manage this circumstance when it has arisen, we have sourced additional counsellors from our staff team at Neath Port Talbot Mind.
- Whilst it is positive that the project has continued to quickly grow and expand the support that it offers, this has naturally resulted in heightened demand on all services offered by the project.
- The loss of one of the Projects Talking Therapy Practitioners in May 2026, meant that there was insufficient time to recruit a new member of staff before the end of the project lifespan. This had an impact on the number of clients the project would be able to support before its completion. To mitigate this issue, NPT Mind sourced additional Counsellors from our staff team, to ensure we were able to support the clients remaining on the waiting list.
- The project approaching an end has been challenging for the many clients that the project has supported, causing feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, frustration and loss. One client shared “This project has changed my life, after so many years of having no hope. I’m frustrated that something that’s working to help people like me, is going to stop, with nowhere else for us to turn.” The approaching end has also been disheartening for the statutory services , such as staff on the Stroke wards at NPT and Morriston Hospital and the Community Stroke Discharge Team, who are concerned for the patients they support due to the absence of dedicated stroke psychology services within the Health Board, the work of NPT WASP has been indispensable.

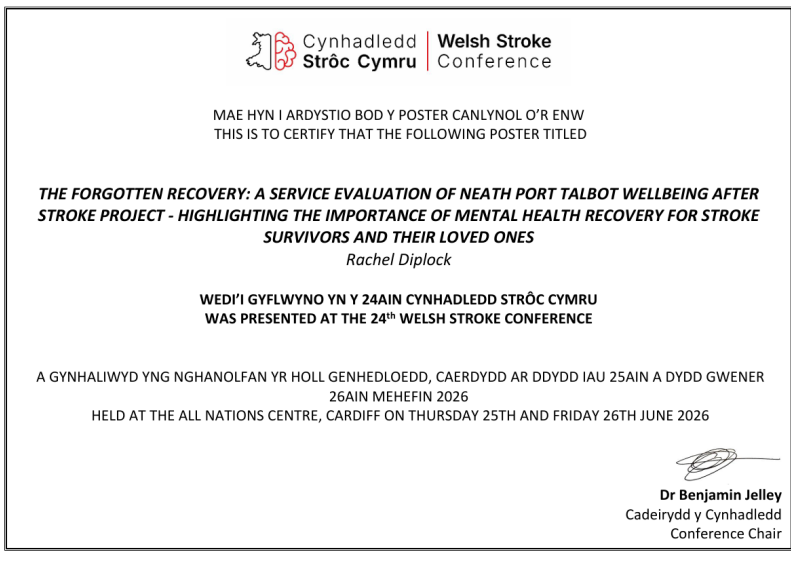
Achievements

In July of 2025, NPT WASP was nominated for a Wales Mental Health Award in the Category of Best Mental Health Support Service. In October of 2025, we were informed that we had been shortlisted as a finalist within the category and were invited to attend the Wales Mental Health Awards In Cardiff.

It was a privilege to be named a finalist within such a prestigious event that had received hundreds of nominations.

In August of 2026, NPT WASP has yet again been shortlisted as finalists, this time in more than one category. The Project is a finalist in the following categories:

Best Mental Health Support Service, Impact in the Community and Best Wellbeing Service.



In May 2026, NPT WASP Project Lead Rachel submitted an Abstract and Academic poster to be considered for Presentation at the Welsh Stroke Conference.

Following judging panel, Rachel was informed the submission was successful and was invited to showcase and present her Service Evaluation of Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing After Stroke Project, highlighting the importance of mental health recovery for stroke survivors at The Welsh Stroke Conference at the All Nations Centre in Cardiff.

THE FORGOTTEN RECOVERY: A SERVICE EVALUATION OF NEATH PORT TALBOT WELLBEING AFTER STROKE PROJECT – HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY FOR STROKE SURVIVORS AND THEIR LOVED ONES.

Author
Rachel Diplock



Affiliations
Neath Port Talbot Mind, Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group

Introduction

Stroke is associated with significant physical and psychological morbidity. National Health Service data indicates that approximately 30% of stroke survivors experience depression, 30% anxiety, and 20% emotional lability, contributing to reduced engagement in rehabilitation, increased caregiver burden, and elevated suicide risk. While medical rehabilitation services address the physical consequences of stroke, the absence of dedicated stroke psychology services across many health board areas results in a concerning gap in stroke-specific psychological support, leaving survivors and families to navigate complex emotional challenges alone.

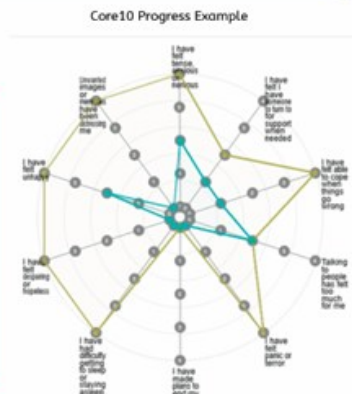
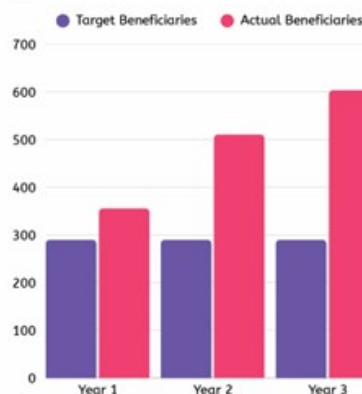


Objective

Here we report on the development/delivery of a bespoke mental health support service, offering a unique community-based approach that bridges the gap between clinical care and emotional support for stroke survivors and their loved ones. The service provides tailored interventions, including counselling and psychoeducational courses, adapted to individual need. Outcomes were evaluated using standardised psychological measures, including the CORE10. The objective of this service evaluation is to highlight the importance of a holistic physical and mental health rehabilitation to further enhance stroke survivors recovery.

Service Delivery

- 01 Following consultation it was established to meet the needs of stroke survivors and their loved ones, the Project would offer a 'pick and mix' support package from options such as Signposting, Counselling, Supported Self Help or psycho-educational group courses.
- 02 Referrals are accepted from a range of sources including statutory health services, social services, other third sector services and self-referrals.
- 03 Each referral received is individually assessed and a tailored individual support plan is co-created with the Beneficiary.
- 04 Services are offered remotely in addition to in-person, to remove barriers to accessing support.
- 05 Outcome measure tools and evaluation forms are utilised throughout all support offered by the service to measure change/progress.



Results

Reduced Psychological Distress	81%
Reduced Depression	80%
Reduced Anxiety	83%
Improved Emotional Wellbeing	80%

10 out of 10 people...
...would recommend the service to others.

Analysis

Feedback received during evaluation forms suggests that the service has provided beneficiaries with the tools to rebuild themselves, which in turn has accelerated their post-stroke recovery. Key areas of improvement reported by Beneficiaries of the project include reduced isolation, increased resilience, increased self-confidence, deeper knowledge and understanding of the mental health impact of stroke, reduced suicidal ideation and an increased sense of belonging/community.

A majority of Beneficiaries shared that the service has been a lifeline due to a lack of statutory stroke specific psychological support in the health board area.

Conclusion

These findings highlight the importance of integrating psychological support into stroke recovery pathways. Improved emotional wellbeing may enhance engagement in physical rehabilitation and reduce social isolation. Feedback further supports the perceived value of the service with one beneficiary sharing "This support saved me. It's given me my life back when I was struggling to accept my condition. It's allowed me to talk about my stroke, understand myself more and work on things that previously scared me".

Acknowledgements and thanks to:

Mind
Neath Port Talbot
Castell-nedd Port Talbot



Developments



Feedback from the Singing for the Brain Wellbeing Session that the project offered was overwhelmingly positive, with beneficiaries requesting further sessions.

This feedback was discussed with Music For Joy, who was sourced by the project to facilitate the session. Rebekah from Music For Joy shared that she had recently become Accredited as a Neurologic Music Therapist. It was agreed that Rebekah would facilitate a 4 week Neurological Music Therapy Group, for a small group of clients, tailored to their individual needs.

A specific Evaluation form was developed to capture the feedback of this piloted group therapy, with feedback showing that all participants found the sessions helpful in improving mood and relaxation and encouraged connection with others and self-expression.

"It was such good fun! It's such a long time since I have sung and it feels so liberating. I loved the way the sessions got better each week. It made me feel so happy and I felt more connected to my fellow participants. My only down is I would have liked more sessions because I was sad when it ended."

Following the death of a number of stroke survivors that the project has supported within the first 2 years, it was feedback to us that a workshop exploring the challenging feelings experienced by carers and loved ones due to bereavement. The workshop addressed topics such as grief, guilt, anger, sadness and a loss of purpose due to no longer being a Carer for their loved one.

"My husband passed away from Cancer. I was his Carer for 13 years before his death as he had a stroke. When he died I felt like I didn't know who I was anymore, as all I had been for so long was his Carer. This workshop helped me to see that it is possible to feel sad about the fact that he is no longer here, but to also be hopeful for what the future has in store."



Developments



Following the Successful implementation of Hospital Outreach at NPT Hospital Stroke Ward during year 2, we initiated conversations with Morriston Hospital Acute Stroke Ward to facilitate this service there also. It was agreed that weekly visits would be more appropriate at Morriston, due to the faster pace of admissions and discharge due to their Ward being Acute. This has been particularly successful, as many patients will not be discharged home following their stay on the Acute ward, therefore may not learn about the support available from our Project.

We then went on to extend our offer of Hospital Outreach Support to the Neuro Rehabilitation Unit, capturing stroke survivors from another area of their recovery journey. This extension of support also organically meant that the project was coming into contact with survivors of brain injury in addition to stroke.

Early within year 3, the partnership initiated discussions around the work achieved by the Project, lessons learned and the future.

It was decided that we would further research the experiences of and support available to Brain Injury Survivors and their loved ones, with a view to encompass this demographic into a possible new Project.

We reached out to individuals impacted by Brain Injury and Services/Organisations involved in their care, to learn from their experiences, identify themes, and highlight gaps in support.

We conducted a range of one to one interviews and focus groups, and utilised this data alongside our own experience of supporting individuals affected by Brain Injury to develop an application for Funding to deliver a new Project. The new project would make use of our 3 years of knowledge and experience supporting those individuals impacted by stroke, continuing to offer these individuals this vital support, whilst also expanding the delivery to a further demographic of individuals impacted by brain injury. This application is currently under review by The National Lottery.

WE'RE

LOOKING FOR

BRAIN INJURY SURVIVORS & LOVED ONES

We want to hear the voices of Brain Injury survivors and their loved ones. We would like to hear your experiences of the support you have received and how this could be improved.

Our project has provided support for over 1200 stroke survivors and their families in the last 2 years, we would like to expand our offer to Brain Injury Survivors and loved ones too.

Please get in touch to share your story and help shape future support through our Project.

Call: 07541760872
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Plans for the Year Ahead

As the Project approaches the end of the three years of funding, our imminent plan is to await the decision from the National Lottery application submitted by ourselves to continue to deliver key aspects of this 3 year project, whilst also expanding the project to deliver new branches of support that were piloted within the initial 3 years (such as the hospital outreach work and befriending service) and also adapt and deliver the support to a new group of beneficiaries (traumatic brain injury survivors and their loved ones). This development is following consultation work undertaken earlier this year. At present our application is due to be assessed at panel in late September 2026.

The partnership are also reviewing alternative funding opportunities, should the application with the National Lottery not be successful.

The partnership are also currently developing a strategy to meet with the Local Health Board and local Assembly Members to present the work of the project and its impact over the last 3 years, to share key lessons learned, best practice and the need for investment in this vital support for stroke / brain injury survivors and their loved ones, to ensure that the good practice and evidence collected over the last three years is not lost.

Spending

The budget for year 3 that the project was granted was £116,535.00, in addition to this an underspend from year 2 of £5237.22 was carried over into year 3, resulting in a total available budget of £121,772.22.

The total amount spent over the course of the year was £124,015.67

Due to a 4% pay rise for staff together with a significant unexpected increase in employers costs , this resulted in an overspend on the Salaries of £4425.35. This will be covered by other areas of underspend within the budget such as printing costs and translation costs

We have continued to promote the project across the breadth of the county, this has meant making full use of the Travel and expenses budget, with a small overspend of £145.67 and an underspend of £333.80 on freelance fees due to a reduction in Counselling staff in the team, meaning less cost for Clinical Supervision.

Due to an Underspend in Year 2 of £860.56 on activities for Wellbeing sessions being carried over to year 3, this gave the Project an increased figure of £4325.56 for this purpose. Within the end of Year 2 report, we stated that we hoped to be able to use this increased figure to provide additional wellbeing sessions promoting self care for service users during year 3. This was successfully carried out, with a total of 17 Wellbeing Sessions being held across the year. We did finish year 3 with an underspend of £558.62. We did also have an underspend for Participation costs of £993.43. This underspend was considered and the decision made that in the new application for funding, that this proposed budget line would be significantly less.

We also had a small underspend of £16.98 for equipment and £1516.83 for room hire.

Whilst we made good use of our budget for Welsh translation, we have not received any requests for translation / interpretation into other languages, which resulted in an underspend across the lifespan of the project of £1104. Whilst this budget was not utilised, it is vital that it is available in order to ensure any possibility of a language barrier is removed when needing to access support.

Lifespan Spending

Year 1—The total budget for year 1 that the project was granted was £111,578. The total amount spent over the course of the year was £106,021.86.

Year 2—The budget for year 2 that the project was granted was £110,454, in addition to this an underspend from year 1 of £5556.14 was carried over into year 2, resulting in a total available budget of £116,010.14. The total amount spent over the course of the year was £110,778.92.

Year 3—The budget for year 3 that the project was granted was £116,535.00, in addition to this an underspend from year 2 of £5237.22 was carried over into year 3, resulting in a total available budget of £121,772.22. The total amount spent over the course of the year was £124,015.67.

Lifespan—Budget—£338,567.00 vs Actual Spend £340,816.45.

Revenue	Total Project Budget	Total Spent	Total Remaining
Start up costs	£0	£0	£0
Salaries, NI and pensions	£278,237	£289,497.88	-£11,260.88
Freelance fees (supervision costs for therapeutic staff)	£3,311	£2,889.40	£421.60
Recruitment	£500	£930.20	-£430.20
Training	£0	£0	£0
Travel and other expenses	£1,892	£2,317.68	-£425.68
Accommodation and utilities (ongoing IT costs for project team)	£1,590	£900.94	£689.06
Marketing and communications	£2,050	£2,043.33	£6.67
Independent evaluation	£2,400	£2,387.50	£12.50
Professional and legal fees	£0	£0	£0
Welsh translation costs	£1,892	£1,664.09	£227.91
Other- translation & interpretation for languages other than	£1,104	£0	£1,104
Other - activity costs (i.e. for wellbeing sessions)	£9,765	£9,206.34	£558.66
Other - room hire	£15,889	£13,318.50	£2,570.50
Other - participation costs (e.g. refreshments)	£4,099	£3,075.57	£1,023.43
Other- printing of course materials	£2,522	£954	£1,568
Revenue total	£325,251	329185.43	-3934.43
Overheads			
Staff (management of staff)	£7,307	£5,639	£1,668
Accommodation	£0	£0	£0
Utilities	£0	£0	£0
Other- please specify	£0	£0	£0
Other- please specify	£0	£0	£0
Overheads total	£7,307	£5,639	£1,668
Capital			
Start up costs	£0	£0	£0
Equipment	£6,009	£5,992.02	£16.98
Land or building purchase	£0	£0	£0
Construction or refurbishment	£0	£0	£0
Professional and legal fees	£0	£0	£0
Other- please specify	£0	£0	£0
Other- please specify	£0	£0	£0
Capital total	£6,009	£5,992.02	£16.98
Totals	£338,567	£340,816.45	-£2,249.45



Everyone at Neath Port Talbot Mind, Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group and the Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing After Stroke Project team would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thanks to the National Lottery Community Fund, without whom this Project would not have been possible.