

Deal & District Strokes Trustees Report 2023-2024

Deal and District Strokes is the main Charity supporting people surviving strokes in East Kent. We regularly get referrals from places such as Ramsgate, Margate and Dover but we are limited to supporting people in the local area. This is a sad reflection on the scarcity of support for stroke survivors and their carers in East Kent. The majority of our members come from Deal and Sandwich and the surrounding areas. One of our limitations is transport as many of our members are unable to drive or do not have access to a car. We still rely totally on volunteers to provide our services with the exception of a very part time paid coordinator.

Our membership has continued to increase demonstrating the need for support services for people who have been affected by stroke as well as their carers and families. We currently support about 60 members. We have a regular walk on Deal Pier followed by coffee in a local restaurant. This encourages members to get out and socialise and is generally well attended. If members are in wheelchairs they will be pushed by volunteers. In addition we have a regular monthly get together at a local community centre and usually a meal in a local restaurant or pub once a month. In the summer we organize picnics and trips to local places of interest. We have also recently acquired an allotment which the more able bodied members enjoy.

Our well- being services are very popular and very beneficial to members many of whom have demonstrated significant improvements in their physical and mental abilities. We continue to engage a physical trainer twice a week to provide bespoke exercises for our members as well as monthly reflexology session for members who wants it. Members pay a small contribution towards the cost of these services. In addition we have identified an accredited counsellor who members have access to. With the help of a volunteer we have set up a small weekly 'conversation' group to help people who have difficulties with their speech.

Due to the demand for support we have a coordinator with experience of adult social care work. The coordinator has ensured that our members are in receipt of all the benefits they are entitled to as well as generally supporting members. One of the biggest challenges for our members is carer 'fatigue' as there is very little statutory support for carers, and hardly any respite support. Our other main challenge is attracting volunteers on whom we depend to run the activities of DDS. We currently have a group of dedicated volunteers, but the expansion of DDS depends largely on our volunteer capacity which we have been trying to address without much success to date. This appears to be a problem for other charities in the area as well.

We have recently appointed two new trustees following the resignation of one trustee.

We continue to work closely with the Stroke Association and our local NHS services.

We provide a monthly newsletter for our members with information about upcoming events.

In conclusion DDS continues to provide an essential and much valued service for people who have been affected by stroke and their carers in Deal and the surrounding areas.