

Connect Consultancy and Training

We can help you make a difference

Connect is a national charity working to improve the lives of people living with aphasia and communication disability. We can support your service improvements and enable people with stroke and communication disability to re-connect with life again. Working together, we can ensure that everyone accesses the best service possible.

What is Connect consultancy?

A menu of innovative resources and services developed through practical experience: from partnership projects to bespoke training and one-to-one mentoring.

Examples include:

- Training over 100 people with communication disability UK-wide to develop the communication skills of health and social care staff and support stroke network activity
- Creating hospital-wide cascade training programmes to change communication practices and culture
- Working with Universities and local NHS/community service partners to offer long-term support and befriending for elderly, isolated people with stroke and aphasia
- Supporting national regulatory bodies to make their public facing documents accessible to all

"I felt cut off, left out, on my own.
It doesn't have to be like that!"

Cressida Laywood, who has aphasia

What can you expect from Connect?

- A commitment to collaborative working and problem solving to achieve your outcomes
- A team of experts who are passionate about access, equality and inclusion for people with communication disability
- A set of tried and tested tools and resources to save you time and enable you to prioritise resources for maximum return
- The expertise and insights of people who live with long term disabilities and are confident in making change for their peers

Working together for change

At Connect we are passionate about making the aspirations of the National Stroke Strategy a reality
We have the tools and expertise to help



Like you, we are aware of the big challenges ahead:

- Developing life long services within limited resources
- Building capacity in the NHS and across all the services and settings that people with stroke and their relatives encounter
- Changing not just skills and confidence but the culture and mindsets that sometimes get in the way of change
- Making sure people who live with stroke are not just consulted but can actively engage in designing, delivering and evaluating creative improvement initiatives

Whatever your challenges, we can support you

Meeting National Stroke Strategy Quality Marker 4 Involving individuals in shaping and delivering services and 19 Workforce development

Training Together BUPA Communication award winner 2008



Changing communication, culture and involvement

“When I was on the ward they were all very nice but people didn’t know how to communicate with me... I couldn’t even get a cup of tea!”

Connect projects and tools help you enhance the communication skills of your workforce across the board. Developing a stroke-skilled workforce means building everyone's capacity to listen, learn and engage with service users. From physicians to chaplains and care staff, from porters to catering and reception staff we can support you to build a workforce with the skills to communicate and the confidence to involve.

Our award-winning Training Together package supports you to train a team of communication skills trainers who have aphasia. These experts will then train your local health and social care staff.

It's win-win-win. Service providers get high impact, user-driven feedback on their practice, and you develop the skills and accessibility of your service. Everyone develops new skills and confidence including the trainers with aphasia!



Ken Bradford helps a healthcare worker to develop her communication skills

Meeting National Stroke Strategy Quality Markers 3 Information, advice and support, Quality Marker 4 Involving individuals in shaping and delivering services 13 Long term care and support, 15 Participation in community life

Information, information, information!



“In the six days since Mum has had this book, she has changed more than in the last year – it’s a life line.”

Relative, about The Stroke and Aphasia Handbook

Improved access to information is a recurrent priority for people who have stroke and aphasia, not to mention their family and friends.

At Connect we have worked with people with communication disability and their relatives to develop a range of publications. For example our Ideas Series covers practical issues such as Caring and Coping, How to Volunteer and how to have Better Conversations. We are happy to work with you to customise these tools to meet your local needs so accessible information is available to all.

But written information alone isn’t enough. We have piloted a series of information, support and peer-to-peer networking days led by people who live with the everyday experience of stroke and aphasia. Feedback to date suggests this delivers exactly the information, support and advice required by people struggling to navigate their personal recovery pathway.

We have run these events around the UK in community centres, colleges and primary care practices. And we can support you to do the same.



Accessible information provided for every patient on the Stroke Unit at Christchurch Hospital, Bournemouth

Meeting National Stroke Strategy Quality Markers 3 Information, advice and support, 4 Involving individuals in shaping and delivering services, 10 High quality specialist rehabilitation, 11 End of Life Care, 12 Seamless transfer of care, 13 Long term care and support, 15 Participation in community life, 16 Return to work

Access to Life – peer-led services

“The reason I trained and work as a befriender is I didn’t want anyone to have to go through the isolation and fear that I had after my stroke.”

Robin Lamerton – Befriending Scheme Co-ordinator

Setting up a peer befriending scheme takes careful planning and attention to practical issues. Drawing on our experience from both urban and rural contexts we now have a comprehensive resource pack to help your team hit the ground running – from training and supervising volunteers, to matching befrienders and befriendeds, to managing health and safety issues.

Award-winning Life After Stroke services

Running a conversation partner scheme – shortlisted for Guardian Public Services Award, 2008
Access to Life project in Cornwall – shortlisted for NHS Impact to Involvement Award, 2008
The Robin Tavistock Award 2008 for services to people living with aphasia



The befriending scheme is just one of our peer-led services that can help you develop skills and leadership amongst people with stroke and aphasia. We also have kits and resources to help you set up:

- Peer-led support groups
- Self management events
- Return to paid and volunteer work
- Nursing and residential home visiting and training
- Awareness raising initiatives



Befrienders George Snell and Simon Prior share a joke

Making a difference to skills, services and lives

We don't just work with stroke services – our expertise is in communication disability and communication access for all. People with aphasia tell us that if you get it right for people with aphasia you get communication right for everyone. That's why we also provide consultancy to organisations and companies who want to make sure their communication is fit for purpose for all their customers.

Connect works with voluntary sector organisations, care home providers, health and social care regulators and researchers to review materials, environments and practice. Our communication access training and toolkits hit the mark every time. Grounded in practical research and the experience of those with communication disability, these innovative resources help to support, change and enable organisations to develop their communication practice and culture.

“For new staff, I feel confident that communication access will now be part of their psyche and they will believe it to be part of the culture of the organisation. If somebody asked if I would recommend this consultancy project I would have no hesitation. It is an excellent initiative.”

Human Resources Manager,
The Royal Donnybrook Hospital

Connect Training

We can bring our courses to you or develop bespoke training to meet your needs. All Connect training courses focus on translating key policy themes into practice – engaging service users, implementing your stroke strategy, transforming social care, supporting relatives and carers, and meeting client-focussed outcomes.



Nigel Stephens, who has aphasia, talking to service providers about developing services in Cornwall

Popular training courses we can bring to you:

- Develop your Communication Skills and Make a Difference
- Making Communication Access a Reality
- Good Goal Setting Guide
- Running a Conversation Partner Scheme
- Groups Work
- Families as a Resource
- From Policy to Practice – Successful Stroke Services



Find out more about all our work at
www.ukconnect.org

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