**Stroke Association**

**Royal honour for Cardiff stroke survivor**

A Cardiff resident has been awarded an MBE in the New Year’s Honours list, after having a stroke aged just 22.

Annabel, who is now 29 and lives in Taff’s Well, was sitting at her desk in work when she had a stroke.

After recovering, Annabel dedicated herself to volunteering for the Stroke Association; raising more than £60,000 and volunteering in her spare time as an ambassador, sharing her personal experience to show that there is life after stroke.

Annabel said:

“When I had the stroke there was no warning. It was as if a perfect vertical line was suddenly drawn down my vision and I couldn’t see anything on the left side. It felt like I’d been hit on the back of the head and I was in excruciating pain.”

Annabel spent a few days in hospital and although her vision improved, she became aware she was facing emotional challenges – something she hadn’t been warned about.

Annabel said:

“The hospital referred me to the Stroke Association who sent a community co-ordinator to my house and she was a breath of fresh air. She answered my questions and gave me lots of information, including a leaflet on depression following a stroke. I checked the symptoms and saw I had most of them.”

Following a year of counselling sessions with a Stroke Association-funded psychologist and support from the community co-ordinator, Annabel felt mentally stronger and able to move forward with life.

Annabel said:

“I recognise that I was lucky; I had the support I needed because I live in the middle of Cardiff. I worry about other people, particularly in rural areas, who might not get the help, because the longer a stroke goes untreated, the worse it gets.

“I want everyone affected by stroke to know that life can be just as good afterwards, if not better if you allow yourself the support to get there. It isn’t a weakness to ask for help – a stroke survivor deserves a life after stroke.”

As a Stroke Association ambassador, Annabel has shared her personal experiences with students at universities, at corporate events and at the National Assembly’s Cross Party Group on Stroke.

She and her friends have also raised more than £60,000, by taking on half marathons and Step Out for Stroke walks.

Carol Bott, Director of the Stroke Association in Wales, said:

“Annabel is thoroughly deserving of this honour. Her work, both in raising funds and in sharing her experience of stroke with those with the power to help improve treatment has been of tremendous value to us.

“Annabel proves that there is life after stroke.”

Annabel was nominated for the MBE by her employers, Barclays Bank PLC, who have supported her through her recovery.

Christopher Wood, CEO of Barclays Partner Finance, said:

“We are absolutely delighted for Annabel. Her passion has inspired colleagues to become more aware and more involved, and she demonstrates what it means to bring your whole self to work, which is something we want everyone at Barclays to feel comfortable doing. She is a shining example of the Barclays values – congratulations!”

Annabel will receive her honour in 2019.

To find out more about what support the Stroke Association in Wales offers, please call 02920 524400, email info.cymru@stroke.org.uk or visit [www.stroke.org.uk/wales](https://clicktime.symantec.com/a/1/me-FiXjaveKZ-iKrblaWRxCqVusuYOL8cjVSFJ1Sfmk%3D?d=78ZPv6VKTKnZqf3O1l43fFbuCEakfU3MMY5pZZRQOrFbfQuU86OzG_VZWWX20Zog64xHI2eIPreTyFHoPu22Q4rgye3syw9Qz1pZoylaX0DuGFUoXXUY4rwtYgLotgdhIg2gyoiu6idql-0XMzXJAEZhzbau2ymFvl34g1UCjgp9KBqapC-3uTlDAs0v9sv_L-E8RicCbwZQuclDe6gXxlNkUBySif45wY1nOtgS5CLESuc-jEA9aiDSRlRn4OoMrnEF6Nl6PxYcw9VZ6H7se1_TGtIfGDMqxTtpOkIB189NQkj70YGeq2zttq3507mPfzkGQJ0_irxzshDmqg19m_FRatDlEHeLXV-ZYj7EK7FfNecR6jxAvXOSIdtrVnFgPdaOWIFlcC_pEcLNbw%3D%3D&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.stroke.org.uk%2Fwales)

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For more information, please contact Ffion Miles on 02920 524419 / 07398110393 or email ffion.miles@stroke.org.uk

About the Stroke Association

* A stroke is a brain attack which happens when the blood supply to the brain is cut off, caused by a clot or bleeding in the brain. Each year around 7,400 people will have a stroke in Wales and the Stroke Association estimates that there are almost 68,000 stroke survivors living in Wales

* Stroke Association is a charity. We believe in life after stroke and together we can conquer stroke. We work directly with stroke survivors and their families and carers, with health and social care professionals and with scientists and researchers. We campaign to improve stroke care and support people to make the best recovery they can. We fund research to develop new treatments and ways of preventing stroke. The Stroke Helpline (0303 303 3100) provides information and support on stroke. More information can be found at [www.stroke.org.uk](https://clicktime.symantec.com/a/1/eteCE83wC3cKh1ieBTCDnXsaujuAnNyrYiKQoJGcFxM%3D?d=78ZPv6VKTKnZqf3O1l43fFbuCEakfU3MMY5pZZRQOrFbfQuU86OzG_VZWWX20Zog64xHI2eIPreTyFHoPu22Q4rgye3syw9Qz1pZoylaX0DuGFUoXXUY4rwtYgLotgdhIg2gyoiu6idql-0XMzXJAEZhzbau2ymFvl34g1UCjgp9KBqapC-3uTlDAs0v9sv_L-E8RicCbwZQuclDe6gXxlNkUBySif45wY1nOtgS5CLESuc-jEA9aiDSRlRn4OoMrnEF6Nl6PxYcw9VZ6H7se1_TGtIfGDMqxTtpOkIB189NQkj70YGeq2zttq3507mPfzkGQJ0_irxzshDmqg19m_FRatDlEHeLXV-ZYj7EK7FfNecR6jxAvXOSIdtrVnFgPdaOWIFlcC_pEcLNbw%3D%3D&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.stroke.org.uk)