

# NO LIFE HALF LIVED

YOU'RE HELPING PEOPLE DO MORE THAN SURVIVE

# RIGHT BY OUR SIDE



**The last 12 months have been the most challenging that most of us will face in our lives. Covid-19 has taken an incredible toll on individuals and on our communities.**

For Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, demand for our services has doubled, while – in common with so many charities – our income has fallen by hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Without your support during this year of lockdown, some of those vital services would have been forced to close, leaving the most vulnerable to cope alone.



**PEOPLE ACROSS SCOTLAND ARE LEAVING HOSPITAL SCARED AND ALONE.**

Read inside how our Hospital to Home service is helping make sure that no-one has to recover alone. See pages 4 and 5.





## YOUR SUPPORT IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

# In the toughest year, your contribution will stand out forever



**"We could not do any of this without your support. Thank you."**



**Your incredible backing means we have been there for the people who need us most right now – and in the future.**

During this year, one of the most difficult of our generation, your fundraising, donations and volunteering support has;

**Provided life-line support for 17,450 people affected by chest, heart and stroke conditions - including Covid 19 - through our services.**

**Launched a new national service with our NHS heroes – supporting people with severe lung conditions including Covid-19 to get home from hospital.**

**Recruited 6,352 volunteers delivering 35,260 acts of kindness in communities across Scotland.**

**Made over 4,011 phone calls to people who are lonely or isolated.**

**Helped our kindness volunteers do 1,100 dog walks and 2,003 shopping deliveries for vulnerable people.**

**Shared life-saving messages and Covid-19 advice 22,327 times online.**

The work of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland was immediately affected by the restrictions put in place as coronavirus cases threatened to run out of control across the UK in March 2020.

We faced an immediate challenge: how could we continue to deliver vital services during the Covid-19 lockdown?

We immediately switched to virtual delivery, establishing a

virtual call centre for our Advice Line. With increased demand from those recovering from the effects of the pandemic, our Hospital to Home service expanded its delivery of lung and heart care.

Our shops had to close, while all our fundraising events were postponed and eventually cancelled. But when we needed you, you were there.

Last March we launched the Scotland Against Coronavirus campaign, calling for volunteers to use their social media feeds to save lives and share essential information about the virus. More than 1,000 people joined the campaign in its first 48 hours.

Our appeal for Kindness Volunteers was the first mass volunteering drive of the pandemic in Scotland, attracting more than 6,000 volunteers

**Last March we launched the Scotland Against Coronavirus Campaign**

keen to offer their help to those who needed it. In a normal year, we would attract only around a quarter of that number to volunteer, demonstrating both the depth of the coronavirus crisis and also the strong community feeling that began to shine through in an increasingly difficult situation.

Over the year, our Kindness Volunteers have delivered shopping to those shielding from the virus and made thousands

of weekly calls to check in on those who feel isolated, scared or lonely.

Virtual fundraising events took off, including our Step-Up Challenge with participants climbing the equivalent of 282 Munros using stairs or steps to raise more than £16,000.

Our Help Answer Our Call emergency fundraising appeal raised more than £50,000, again demonstrating the amazing desire for people like you to do more for their community.

While the country went in and out of lockdown, our shops - staffed by our amazing volunteers - reopened and closed when required.

And all the while we stayed focused on our number one priority: helping people who needed support more than ever.

As the vaccination programme is rolled out further, we can tentatively look forward to returning to some kind of normality.

But the effects of coronavirus continue to reverberate, particularly in those now suffering from Long Covid who will now benefit from a new service part funded by The Scottish Government. Meanwhile, our No Life Half Lived campaign - to ensure those suffering from chest, heart and stroke conditions can live full lives with the right support - gathers pace.

We could not do any of this without our dedicated fundraisers, supporters and volunteers. In a year to forget for many, your contribution will stand out forever.

**Donations from you make all the difference, and all the money raised stays in Scotland.**

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland

**GET THE LATEST ON HOW YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE**

[www.chss.org.uk/impact](http://www.chss.org.uk/impact)

## INVESTMENT BOOST FOR OUR SUPPORT SERVICES

# £760,000 FUNDING FOR LONG COVID CARE

**"It gives me hope there might be a recovery for us all."**

**SANDRA**



**A massive £760,000 funding package will take the "vital first step" towards creating a coordinated nationwide approach in caring for people with Long Covid.**

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and the Scottish Government say the package will boost capacity for the charity's support services.

Thanks to the generosity of corporate funders and trusts, the charity is providing £300,000 of the total funding with the rest from the Scottish Government.

The investment in the lifeline service follows Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's Long Covid Care Now campaign, in which people sent thousands of emails to MSPs urging action to offer better care for people with the condition.

Long Covid is a complex condition in which sufferers experience symptoms ranging from breathlessness to chronic fatigue, anxiety and stress.

Estimates suggest as many as 10 percent of people in Scotland who have had Covid-19 are now living with Long Covid. Research by King's College London suggests Long Covid affects around 10 percent of 18-49-year-olds, rising to a fifth (22 percent) of all over 70s.

The new funding package will also lead to the creation of a coordinated nationwide care pathway between the NHS, GPs and Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.

For Long Covid sufferer Sandra Potter, a new coordinated approach to care cannot come quickly enough, and she welcomed the news of the funding.

Sandra, 72, of Broxburn in West Lothian, contracted Covid-19 in March 2020 and, a year on,

is suffering the effects of Long Covid. She said: "I am so pleased someone is finally listening to us. I saw a doctor in June, 13 weeks after I first got Covid, and she apologised because she couldn't do anything for me.

**"This funding will make sure that people can now get better support and do not suffer alone"**

"Covid was all too new for them. She said to me 'just take it easy and try to recover'.

"Well, I'm trying, but I'm still not feeling any better and I know there are lots of people like me. I've still got a cough and breathlessness. I do deep breathing exercises by the open window every morning because I wake up with such bad congestion.

"I also feel terrible fatigue - I sleep for two hours every afternoon because I don't have the energy to stay awake. I've even lost my singing voice. Ok, it wasn't much of a singing voice, but it was mine!

"It is a relief to hear that Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is taking this seriously. It gives me hope there might be a recovery for us all."

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland has already set up an advice line to help those with Long Covid, which is available on 0808 801 0899.

Over the coming months, the charity's services will become a routine part of the NHS referral system. This means GPs and health professionals will automatically be able to refer patients to the service for help.

For Long Covid sufferer Pam Lawson, of Ratho near Edinburgh, support for those in her situation is

absolutely crucial.

The 48-year-old computer analyst developed Covid-19 in April 2020 and seemed to recover quickly before a worrying relapse. Today Pam is living with chronic headaches, speech problems and

fatigue. But she's upbeat about her recovery and says every improvement is a boost.

She said: "People with Long Covid need information, and they urgently need this service to give them support. I wish it had been there for me last summer, but I am delighted it is here for everyone now."

Other areas where those affected by Long Covid have identified gaps in their care include the need for better training for health professionals, access to tests and rehabilitation. Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is in discussions with the Scottish Government on how to take this forward.

Jane-Claire Judson, Chief Executive at Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, said: "No one should be left to struggle with Long Covid alone. This joint funding package with the Scottish Government is a vital first step in providing better all-round care for people suffering the debilitating long-term effects of this devastating virus.

"There are a number of steps still to take to get to a fully integrated, nationwide service for Long Covid, but this funding will make sure that people can now get better support and do not suffer alone."

Health Secretary Jeane Freeman said the Scottish Government is committed to ensuring those suffering from the effects of the virus have nationwide and coordinated care, and she said the experience of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland was vital in the project.

Ms Freeman added: "There is still much to learn and a great deal to be done. But we are working hard to make sure people can access the services currently available and that we make the improvements needed as quickly as possible.

Dr Amy Small is a GP who has

been living with Long Covid. She said: "The impact of this virus affects your whole life. I lost the job that I loved because I wasn't well enough to continue, I lost my health and it really affects you mentally.

"There's lots we still need to fix, but it's great to see everyone is coming together to build the service people with Long Covid need and want."

**The CHSS Advice Line is available now on 0808 801 0899. You can also find further information on Long Covid at [www.chss.org.uk/longcovid](http://www.chss.org.uk/longcovid)**

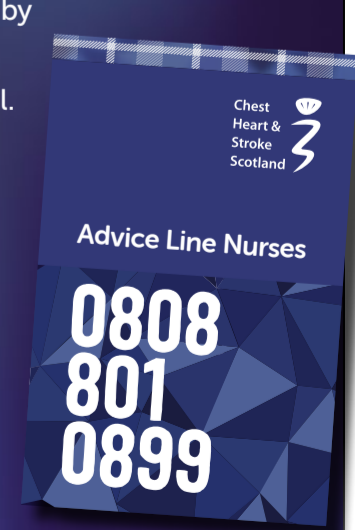
## CALL ADVICE LINE ADVICE LINE IS HERE FOR YOU.

Our specialist nurses offer a supportive, listening ear and tailored health advice to anyone affected by chest, heart or stroke conditions.

All calls are free and confidential.  
CALL : Freephone 0808 801 0899  
EMAIL : [advice@chss.org.uk](mailto:advice@chss.org.uk)  
TEXT: NURSE to 66777

We can offer expert advice to families, carers and health and social care professionals, too.  
Ask about our free booklets and factsheets on chest, heart, stroke and related conditions, sent by email or post. We also provide:

- Telephone interpreting service.
- New Generation text relay service.
- Air quality & weather text alert service.





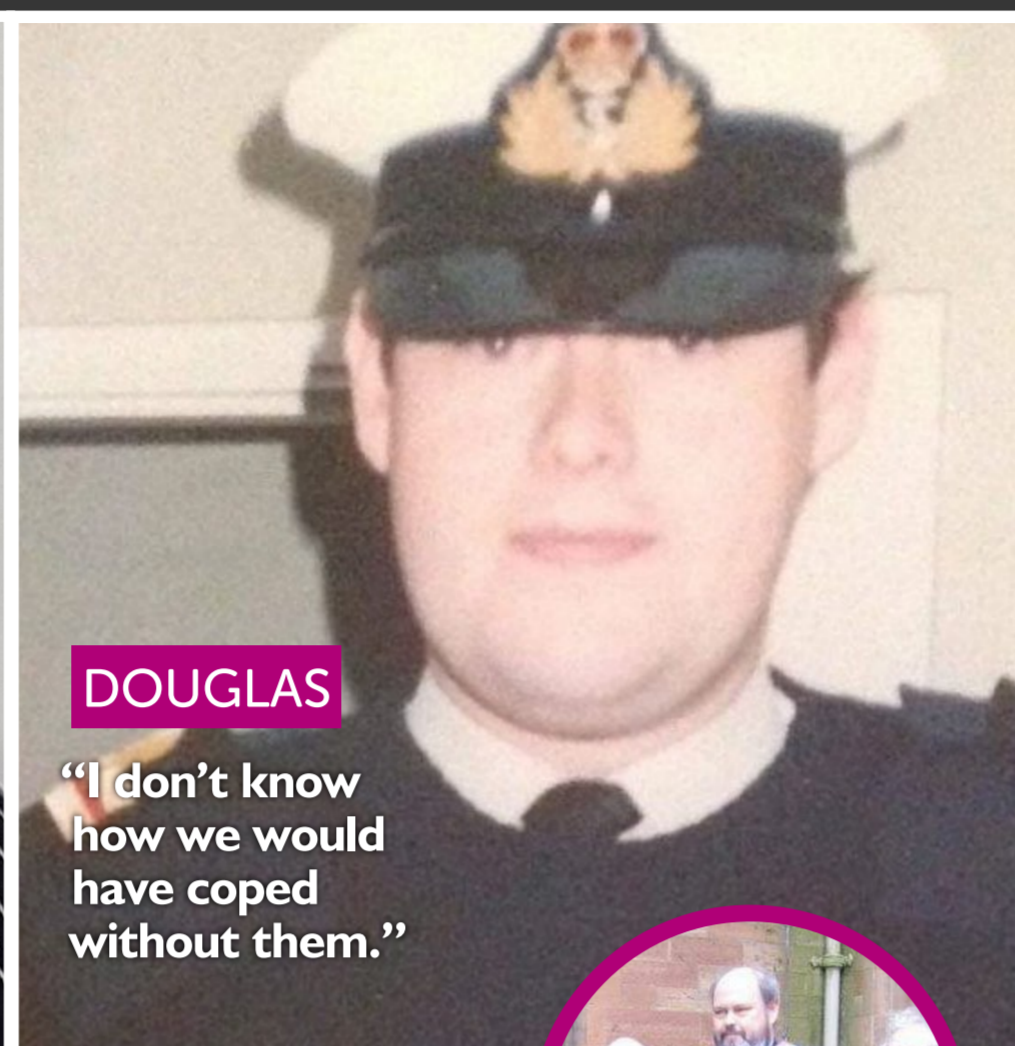
# SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH CHEST, HEART AND

# STROKE CONDITIONS FROM HOSPITAL TO HOME



**AGNES**

“I feel more motivated every week I go.”



**DOUGLAS**

“I don’t know how we would have coped without them.”



**JOHN**

“I know I can always call Becky if I have any questions”



# Stories from Scotland’s Survivors

## AGNES INSPIRED BY ONLINE EXERCISE GROUP

**Diagnosed with bronchiectasis when she was just 22 years old, Agnes Laidlaw has successfully managed her condition for more than 40 years.**

But the mum of two daughters and three stepsons admits the last year of lockdown has been the most challenging of her life.

Lockdown restrictions also mean her favourite way to socialise, through the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Cheerful Chesters support group, has been put on hold, but she’s found a great alternative in the charity’s exercise and social group on Zoom.

**“When I’ve felt a bit fed up, the Zoom groups cheer me up and keep me active, too.”**

Agnes, 65, of Inverness, says: “Lockdown has changed my life completely. I have been living inside my house for close to a year now because I’ve been shielding. I just can’t take any chances of ending up in hospital.

“I have seen my girls in the garden

and that’s meant everything to me, but we haven’t been able to hug or see the grandchildren. It’s been very hard indeed.”

Agnes has been going to Cheerful Chesters for almost six years.

She says: “I miss the group. We do exercises, then we have a good chat and a cup of tea. We all have a chest condition, so we understand each other and what we’re all going through. But that’s all stopped because of lockdown. I really miss my social life.

“Then I found out about the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland exercise and social group on Zoom, and I’ve really enjoyed going to those each week.

“When I’ve felt a bit fed up, the Zoom groups cheer me up and keep me active, too. I feel more motivated every week I go.”

Bronchiectasis is a long-term condition affecting the airways of the lungs and making them more at risk of infection. Agnes must clear phlegm from her lungs daily, and she uses a nebuliser with antibiotics to prevent infections.

Right now she’s focused on the end of lockdown and being able to hug her family again. Agnes says: “That is what is keeping me going.”

## THE RIGHT PEOPLE ON THE END OF THE PHONE

**Hospitalised after a stroke last March, Douglas Ramsay couldn’t wait to get home. Unfortunately, within days of discharging himself, he realised he had contracted Covid-19 during his hospital stay.**

Desperate not to go back into hospital, Douglas remained at home where wife Allison nursed him through the worst of the virus.

But still battling the effects of the stroke on his mobility, Douglas felt lost and alone until he called the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Advice Line and was put in touch with Sarah.

Douglas, 60, of Elderslie in Renfrewshire, says: “I had so many questions about my stroke and that’s how I found Sarah. She answered all my questions and gave me really good advice. She knew I needed help and she called me every week to check how I was getting on.

“At first, I was asking about medical stuff, but actually what I found was that social interaction was just as important.

**“I don’t know how we would have coped without them.”**

I had issues picking up my prescriptions when I first got home and Sarah sorted all of that for me, too.

“We struggled to get our food shopping and Sarah managed to arrange that by finding us a Kindness Volunteer called Graham. Graham has been amazing, and he has done so much for us.

“I don’t know how we would have coped without them.”

Douglas has had to retire from his job as a radiographer because of ill health. And he admits he has struggled to deal with the effects of the stroke and Covid-19.

He says: “It felt like the end of the world. But with Sarah’s help, I managed to ground myself. And I know if I ever need her help, she will be there for me.

“She helped me realise my life isn’t over. Anyone else who has had Covid-19 or a stroke should get help from Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland like I did. My ultimate goal is to walk again, get outside, and hopefully drive again at some point too.

“Hopefully, I will walk again and I have the drive to keep going. But I know if it doesn’t happen, I will be fine and I can still live my life. Sarah has helped me realise there’s life after stroke. You’ve got the right people on the end of the phone.”

## JOHN DIDN’T REALISE HE’D HAD A HEART ATTACK

**Lorry driver John Gawler pulled into a layby when he felt a bit under the weather during a delivery run but soon felt well enough to drive on.**

A routine health check at work noted irregular blood pressure, and John had three stents fitted to his heart valve.

But it was only in January 2021 – a full year later – that his GP told John what had happened to him was actually a heart attack.

John, 62, who lives in Inverness, says: “I thought a heart attack would feel like a sledgehammer hitting your chest – where the pain is so great that you clutch your chest and hit the ground.

“But I just felt hot and sweaty for a few minutes and that was it. I was in complete shock after that. I didn’t realise you could have a heart attack and not even realise it. That’s one of the reasons why I want to share what happened to me in case it can help other people.”

John lives on his own and is used to the solitary life of the long-distance lorry driver. But signed off work after the heart op, he found himself overwhelmed.

“Being a lorry driver can be a lonely life anyway, so I’m

used to not talking to anyone on some days. But it’s still felt quite hard.

“I go out for walks when things get tough or I start feeling stuck. I even took a four mile detour to post a letter, just to get out and keep busy!”

**“I know I can always call Becky if I have any questions about my health or anything at all.”**

He recalls: “At first when someone told me about Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, I said I didn’t want to know. But then a nurse called Becky phoned me and she was just great.

“Becky helped me with everything, like giving me advice on how I could still eat the foods I liked.

“I know I can always call Becky if I have any questions about my health or anything at all. I know how much that must mean to others, too. Like me, they might be living alone and so having a person there they can trust can make all the difference.”



## SHARE YOUR STORY

Feeling inspired by these tales of courage, bravery and resilience? Whether you’re living with one of our conditions or have done something really incredible in support of a friend or family member who does, we’d love to hear your amazing stories.

Your stories can help us raise awareness of chest, heart and stroke conditions, at the same time as inspiring people just like you to live their lives to the full after a diagnosis. Please get in touch at [stories@chss.org.uk](mailto:stories@chss.org.uk) to share your story.

## BE A FUNDRAISING SUPERHERO IN 2021!

WE NEED YOU TO RISE TO THE CHALLENGE FOR CHEST HEART & STROKE SCOTLAND

[www.chss.org.uk/events](http://www.chss.org.uk/events)



Join one of our fantastic fundraising events\* for 2021. Every single one is designed to dare you and to inspire you.

Become a tartan special on a virtual Kiltwalk in April or step out for the live Kiltwalk in August. You can even boost your fundraising by 50%, thanks to the generosity of the Hunter Foundation. For every £100 you raise, the Foundation will boost that to £150 – for free!

Move mountains to help others in our May Munro Challenge. Choose to tackle a Munro in person or opt for the virtual

climb on the bank holiday weekend.

Want a test of your endurance? Sign up for the Virtual Virgin Money London Marathon and complete your run your way in 24 hours in October. Or a spark for adventure? In our new Walk the Flames challenge, you’ll walk barefoot across glowing embers that sizzle up to 650°C!

This is your chance to do something amazing and help us ensure no one has to recover alone when they leave hospital. Be our fundraising superhero this year!

\* Our events may be subject to change due to the ongoing situation with coronavirus. To keep you safe, we are continuing to review all upcoming events to ensure they comply with the Scottish Government’s latest official guidance. We’ll let you know about any changes as soon as we can.

SHOP ONLINE

## SHOP NOW AT OUR NEW ONLINE BOUTIQUE!

GET THE DESIGNER BARGAIN OF YOUR DREAMS DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR!





Our digital shelves are packed with fabulous, pre-loved fashion from designer names such as Calvin Klein, Ted Baker, Ralph Lauren, Barbour and so much more. We’ve handpicked the very best from our beautiful boutique stores across Scotland. Now you can browse the racks of handpicked haute couture and unique vintage gems from the comfort of your sofa and have your fantastic fashion finds delivered straight to your door. What are you waiting for? Go online now to [www.chss.org.uk/shop](http://www.chss.org.uk/shop) to find the ultimate pret a porter for spring and summer!

[www.chss.org.uk/shop](http://www.chss.org.uk/shop)



# MAKING A SPLASH AND RAISING SOME CASH



## NHS HEROES RUN 1,700KM

RAISING MONEY FOR A GREAT CAUSE

A team of 30 staff from Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin have raised more than £3,500 for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland after running more than 1,700 kilometres.

The NHS heroes all work in the hospital's emergency department, saving lives daily, and signed up for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's Culloden Run, which was run virtually. They ran 1,746km and smashed their initial target of £1,746—to commemorate the Battle of Culloden—to raise an amazing £3,555. Donate to their fund online at [www.justgiving.com/team/teamDGH](http://www.justgiving.com/team/teamDGH)



# SCOTLAND'S

WE LOVE SEEING THE FUN, CREATIVE, ENERGETIC AND HEROIC WAYS YOU'VE



## LAPS CHALLENGE FOR DONALD, 87

Keen walker and stroke survivor Donald Skinner, 87, jumped at the chance to put his daily ambles to good use in lockdown.

Donald has been leading residents and staff at Fidra House Nursing Home in laps of the garden since July, raising more than £5,035.

Having moved from his Edinburgh home to Fidra House three years ago after suffering a stroke, Donald benefited from sessions at North Berwick Stroke Club, which is affiliated to Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. Staff are matching the residents' daily laps with their own walks.

Donald said: "It's been a great motivator to get outside and stay active."



## FAMILIES STEP DAILY IN 5K CHALLENGE

Families who challenged each other to walk 5k a day for a month have raised a phenomenal £5,000 to buy blood pressure monitors.

The families, from the Western Isles, called themselves *Team Macaskill and Miles for Mairi* in memory of loved ones lost to stroke.

Last July they all stepped daily on behalf of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and now the isles of Lewis, Harris, Uist and Barra will benefit from the vital monitors.

Elaine Nicolson, of Team Macaskill, said: "The daily walks were tough going, but to see the result of our efforts and kind donations is fantastic. That it will support other patients and families like ours is terrific."



## STAR BAKERS

Three friends, Cos, Iona and Rowan were star bakers and fundraising heroes when they held a bake-sale raising an incredible £99.12. In an amazing effort, Cos and Iona were selling cakes whilst Rowan did home deliveries of pre-orders on her bike.

They decided to organise the bake sale and raise vital funds because our Portobello shop is their favourite charity shop. They love our friendly team and browsing the books and toys. It's sometimes even hard for their parents to get them to leave! Thank you so much Cos, Iona and Rowan and keep baking!

A year ago, Carole Fortune from Edinburgh lay on her bedroom floor, paralysed after having a massive stroke. Now she's running marathons to give back to the charity that changed her life.

When Carole Fortune woke up on the floor unable to move, she didn't know what had happened.

Her first thought was that she had overdone things in the gym the night before. Then, to her horror, she realised she had no feeling down her left side.

In a panic, Carole called on daughter Jade who quickly realised her mum was having a stroke and called 999.

Carole recalls those terrifying moments, saying: "I woke up on my bedroom floor and couldn't push myself up. I knew something was seriously wrong, it was terrifying."

In recovery, Carole has worked hard to regain her strength and return to running. And she credits the support she received from our Stroke Nurse Thomas Jones for putting her on the road to recovery.

She says: "After a stroke, your head is swimming with questions and so many worries, and I was suffering from a lot of anxiety."

"Thomas was absolutely brilliant. He helped me come to terms with this major thing that had just interrupted my life."

One year on from suffering a stroke, Carole pulled on her running shoes to tackle the virtual London Marathon and raise money for other survivors like her.

"I'm determined to give back to the charity that changed my life," says Carole. "I hope everyone supports Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland so they can still be there for people like me who really need their help and services in the future."



"I'm determined to give back to the charity that changed my life"

## MARATHON MUM

CAROLE RAISES A 'FORTUNE' AFTER STROKE

# SUPERHEROES

BEEN RAISING MONEY ACROSS THE COUNTRY. TIME TO GET YOUR CAPE ON!

## Scotmid raises incredible £300k for stroke survivors



Staff, customers and members of Scotmid Co-operative have raised an amazing £300,000 to support stroke survivors.

The extraordinary total raised means Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland can provide six months of essential support for 1,000 stroke survivors across Scotland, giving them vital help when they need it most.

Scotmid staff took part in fundraising events such as abseiling off the Forth Bridge, an eight-hour relay challenge and Munro bagging, getting more inventive in their challenges when pandemic restrictions were in place.

Scotmid staff across Scotland also worked with our Kindness Volunteers to deliver shopping to vulnerable people.

Jane-Claire Judson, Chief Executive of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, thanked everyone at Scotmid, saying: "You have kept us going through what has been one of the hardest years any of us have ever experienced."

"You have kept us going through what has been one of the hardest years any of us have ever experienced."

**BARCLAYS**  
**£100K BOOST TO COMBAT COVID-19**  
 Barclays Community Aid Programme handed over an amazing £100,000 to Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland in October to help the charity in its work with the NHS to combat Covid-19.  
 Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is the leading national service working directly as part of the NHS discharge pathway for respiratory patients.  
 We're now also able to support people with Long Covid thanks to Barclays' generous support.

## £18,223 FESTIVE THANKS!

Christmas might seem like a long time ago now but your incredible donations helped us raise an amazing £18,223 in our 2020 Christmas appeal.

Every penny raised is helping us give the gift of hope to families like Zoe and Amy's who saw mum Catriona recover from a sudden heart attack with the support of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland nurse Wendy.

In their words, "Wendy was the person who gave mum her confidence back. She is living her life to the full because of you."

With your support, nurses like Wendy can make a difference every day to the lives of hundreds of families across Scotland.

On behalf of all of them, we say thank you to each and every one of you.

**GIRLS' BRIGADE SCOTLAND IN FESTIVE CHEER FOR CHRISTMAS DAY**  
 Girls' Brigade chaplain, the Rev Jonathan Fleming, and his daughter Hollie were keen to show off the creative face coverings they donned at Christmas to raise funds for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.  
 The duo, from Largs in Ayrshire, joined Girls' Brigade companies across Scotland to participate in our Christmasks Day on December 4. We asked people across Scotland to wear one of our festive face covering and donate £5 to help people living with chest, heart and stroke conditions.  
 We sold nearly 3000 Christmasks face coverings raising £14,640 of vital funds.

**XMAS ROUND UP**



## YOUR CALLS ARE SPREADING

## SO MUCH KINDNESS ACROSS SCOTLAND



FREYA

CHRIS

# MY RAY OF SUNSHINE

“We have such a laugh and a joke, and I really look forward to her calls”

### First Minister hails Kindness Caller programme that has made firm friends of Chris, 70, and student Freya

Stroke survivor Chris Smith has found a friend for life in Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Kindness volunteer Freya Riley.

And at Christmas the pair found themselves with a different voice on their twice-weekly phone calls – First Minister Nicola Sturgeon.

The First Minister joined the Fifers to show her support for the Christmas Together campaign,

“It’s clear the kindness calls make a huge difference to both of them”

a joint initiative between Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and the Together Coalition to help relieve loneliness.

For Chris, 70, of Springfield, near Cupar, life looked bleak when he was discharged from hospital after his stroke last March. But all that changed when he was paired with Kindness volunteer Freya, 18, of Keltly. The duo now speak twice weekly and have become firm friends.

After joining them for a chat before Christmas, Ms Sturgeon said: “It was great to speak to Chris and Freya. We talked about the passion they have for food and how much the calls they share every week matter to them.

“It’s clear the kindness calls make a huge difference to both of them and have really helped Chris at a difficult time.

“Words will never be able to describe how tough this pandemic has been for people across the country. But even small acts of kindness like a phone call to someone who may be feeling lonely can give so much hope.”

Chris lives on his own and used to chat to his brother and sister regularly by phone but had sadly lost each of them in the months before his stroke. With no sign of any company because of lockdown rules, Chris faced a lonely time.

Chris, who is registered blind but has some sight, says: “I was on my own when I got home. I used to speak to both my sister and my brother on the phone, but they both passed away and I didn’t really have anyone left to chat to. I was really missing having a chat on the phone. I’m limited to what I can do,

and I was completely on my own.”

The uplifting change came when Hazel Staniforth, Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland’s Community Support Services Co-ordinator for Perth & Kinross, got in touch and

“I would encourage people to sign up and help someone.”

asked Chris if he’d like a weekly call from a Kindness Volunteer.

A delighted Chris recalls: “Then Freya started calling me twice a week. We have such a laugh and a joke, and I really look forward to her calls. We’ve become great pals.

“It’s so nice that she gives up her time twice a week to check in with me, and we talk for about an hour. She’s always on time and I know I can count on her call. We talk about music, and food and I tell her all about my garden.

“Her calls have been so good for me. It cheers me up no end knowing there is someone at the end of the phone.

“I call her my wee sunshine because she just brightens up my day! I don’t know what I’d do without my calls with Freya.”

Freya is doing a primary teaching degree at university. She became a Kindness Volunteer last March after seeing an advert for digital volunteers on social media.

She said: “I was happy to take on the Kindness Call role as I am living at home with my mum and dad and it was nice to chat to someone else other than them! I don’t have any elderly people in my life as my grandparents passed away, so it was great to be matched up to Chris for that reason.

“We have a good chat twice a week, and it is lovely to know you are making a difference to someone’s life. The elderly generation have so many stories to tell, and he is always full of stories and tales. We talk about lots of different things and always have a laugh. He is just a delight to chat to and I really look forward to our calls.

“I would encourage people to sign up and help someone. I know how happy my call makes Chris feel and I know it makes such a difference to him. We were strangers at the start, but now we are firm friends, and we hope to be able to meet up sometime soon so we can see each other in person.”

**A GREAT DEAL OF KINDNESS**



**6352**

KINDNESS VOLUNTEERS



**35,260**

ACTS OF KINDNESS



**4011**

KINDNESS CALLS



RON

The weekly phone chat with student Catriona McCall has become the highlight of Ron’s week

CATRIONA

# The Power of a Phone Call

### Ron, 77, and Kindness volunteer Catriona both buoyed by weekly chat

When Ron Bowes had a heart attack at home last April, he was back home within 48 hours. As widower Ron lives alone, he then had to rely on family and friends to shop for him as lockdown kept everyone at home.

In stepped Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland’s Kindness Volunteers, one to do his shopping and one to give him a kindness call, and that weekly phone chat with student Catriona McCall has become the highlight of Ron’s week.

Ron, 77, of Rosyth in Fife, says: “Catriona calls me every week. I really look forward to her call. It’s so nice to speak to someone with fresh young ideas and a young outlook on life. We often just chat away, then something will come up and I’ll relay some of my tales of old.

“I used to live abroad, and I think she likes to hear about my experiences and it’s lovely to share them with her. I do speak to my family, but it’s nice to have a completely different conversation with Catriona.”

Catriona, 22, is originally from Fife and now lives in Aberdeen where she is studying occupational therapy at the city’s Robert Gordon University. She

has been calling Ron every week since April, just two weeks after his heart attack.

She says: “I was on a break and saw lots of people signing up to help others. I wanted to do something productive. I had done a wee bit of befriending before, and although I was nervous, I knew it was something I could manage.”

Last summer Ron introduced Catriona to bird watching via the Woodland Trust webcam of the osprey nest at Loch Arkaig near Lochaber.

“I get such a lot from the call. I forget it’s even called volunteering.”

Catriona says: “It was wonderful to watch, and it is something I would never have seen or had an interest in without calling Ron.

“I get such a lot from the call. I forget it’s even called volunteering. I sadly lost my Gran during the pandemic and I had to say goodbye to her over the phone, so I understand the power of a telephone call.”



IRENE

William’s weekly chats are such a cheer

Lockdown in 2020 was tough on Irene Herkes. Living alone in her Haddington home, Irene, 80, felt hemmed in by the four walls and missing her family and friends.

One call to the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Advice Line changed things for the better for the pensioner. She was put in touch with Kindness volunteer William and now she can’t wait for their weekly chat.

Irene, who has a heart condition and has had a stroke, says: “It means such a lot to me that William makes that call once a

week. He’s like how every mother would like her son to be.

“I struggle being in the house all the time. I don’t want to burden my family as they have enough going on, so it’s great to have William to speak. He talks to me about his Gran, and I think that is why he can relate to me and help me.

“His calls always cheer me up and give me a bit of hope. It’s great to know someone else cares enough to give you a ring every week.”

Civil servant William, of Glasgow, says his own Gran was the inspiration for him signing up to become a Kindness Call

volunteer.

He says: “I know my Gran found it hard not seeing her family, and I wanted to help others in the same situation. Irene is on her own and doesn’t get to see her family as much as she wants to, and that can make her feel down.

“I love having a chit-chat with Irene and talking about all the things we’ve got in common, like our love of football. Her family is all Celtic mad and so is mine.

“We try to avoid talking about Covid-19 and lockdown because it’s nice to take our minds off it for the time we’re on the phone – it’s like an escape for me and I hope it is for Irene, too.”





**I SUPPORT THE NO LIFE HALF LIVED CAMPAIGN**

# SCOTLAND'S POLITICIANS BACK NO LIFE HALF LIVED CAMPAIGN

**WE ASK FOR SUPPORT IN SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT FOR VITAL SERVICE**

**Politicians across the political spectrum are backing Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's vision of No Life Half Lived.**

As Scotland prepares to vote in the 2021 Scottish Parliamentary elections, we are asking our political party leaders to promise they'll do more to ensure Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's Hospital to Home service is there for all.

Thousands of people are missing out on this life-changing support - and we've asked our politicians to help change that.

No Life Half Lived aims to ensure everyone gets the care and support they need, when and where they need it. Our Hospital to Home service provides vital one-to-one support to help those recovering from a chest, heart or stroke condition so they can stay well at home and manage their condition.

But there's more to be done, and we need our political leaders to help us achieve this.

SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon said the No Life Half Lived campaign is a "really important one, which has the potential to save lives."

She added: "Helping people get back home from hospital and live well is so important, and I am committed to making sure the whole of Scotland can benefit from this approach."

"I want to convey my sincere thanks to Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland for the vital work they have done this year, and continue

to do, to support people and communities across Scotland."

Anas Sarwar MSP became leader of Scottish Labour in March and immediately threw his weight behind our campaign.

He said: "The Hospital to Home service has been invaluable for so many individuals, especially during the pandemic and we agree that it should be open to all those that would benefit."

"The priority for the next Parliament must be on recovery, with a full restart plan for the NHS at the centre. People with chest, heart and stroke conditions need improvement in long-term care as well as a new heart disease strategy and fully funded Respiratory Action Plan."

"Long Covid has highlighted the importance of good rehabilitation, so we want to see better care delivered in our communities to help people

recover once they leave hospital and support individuals to live fulfilling lives."

Douglas Ross MP, leader of the Scottish Conservatives, gave his backing to No Life Half Lived and said his party's priority in the next Scottish Parliament would be on support for those living with long-term conditions.

He said: "I believe people with chest, heart or stroke conditions need access to the right support after leaving hospital to regain their independence and keep them well."

"As the NHS recovers from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is essential people with long-term conditions continue to receive the support they need. Technology should be utilised where it would improve people's independence or support ongoing monitoring of their health."

"Services should be coordinated so people are not having to repeatedly explain their needs, and there should no longer be a postcode lottery - every Scot, no matter where they live, should be able to access the same support."

Willie Rennie, the leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, also offered his support to the No Life Half Lived campaign.

He said his party's manifesto for the Holyrood elections would "give a voice to representative groups and charities who are working hard to make lives better".

He added: "We will listen to NHS staff about how to build a strong NHS and conduct a major national effort to improve wellbeing, to tackle the barriers to good health and recover from the pandemic. We can't allow the progress that we have seen in tackling heart disease and strokes to slide."

Patrick Harvie, co-leader of the Scottish Green Party, also backed the No Life Half Lived campaign, saying it delivers the care at home and in the community that "is exactly what is needed".

He said: "This holistic approach empowers people and helps them manage their condition. We are proposing significant increases in investment in public health, particularly into community health, which plays such an important role in supporting those with chest, heart and stroke conditions."

## HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES



### DJ JOHN BACK ON AIRWAVES AFTER SHOCK STROKE

**When John Thomson collapsed while shaving, he lay helpless on the bathroom floor, unable to move.**

Fortunately for John, wife Janet called 999 immediately - saving his life.

But John had lost his speech and not only had to give up his job as a bus driver but also the hobby he loved most - as a local DJ.

John, of Glasgow, recalls the first few months after his stroke in March 2018: "I spent nearly two months in hospital. I couldn't move my legs or my right hand and I couldn't speak. It was hard going from speaking non-stop and being a chatty person on the radio."

John was devastated that DJing, his passion for more than 16 years, seemed to have been taken from him. Then he met Margo, a Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Community Support Worker funded by your donations.

He joined the support group Margo runs and, despite lockdown, the group has continued to meet online every week. Now John has rediscovered his love for DJing and is back on the airwaves, hosting two radio shows every week.

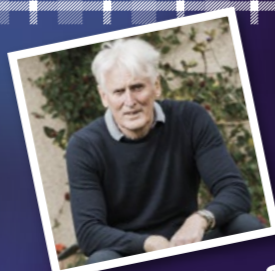
John says: "The group has definitely helped. I enjoy chatting away to others who are all like me. Once I start to speak, I can't stop."

"Two years ago, I couldn't say my name. Now I can have a full conversation and people understand me on the radio."

"I would say to other stroke survivors to try to stay positive. It's easy to feel fed up, but you need to keep fighting and keep trying as best you can!"

**Your donations make this happen. Because of you, John and so many others like him are living their lives to the full and getting back to what they love doing in life. Thank You.**

Thanks for supporting  
**THE NO LIFE HALF LIVED CAMPAIGN**



Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland

## YOUR BIG EFFORTS ARE MAKING A BIG DIFFERENCE

# 5k walk every day

**KENNY & STACEY**

**KENNY & CLAIRE**

**DAVE**

## Brother's 155km raised thousands in memory of beloved sister

**When Kenny Cooper's sister died at the age of just 39 following a stroke, he knew he wanted to do something to keep her memory alive and raise awareness of the risk of stroke in young adults.**

What he didn't know is that he'd end up walking 5km every single day in December, walking a total of 155km and raising an incredible £2,500 for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.

The 31-year-old, from Motherwell, admits he's "not the fittest person" around, but he was determined to do something for his late sister Claire McIntyre, of

Budhill.

Kenny, a multi-skilled engineer, says: "Claire was a brilliant person and a wonderful big sister. I looked up to her all my life."

**"On days I struggled to get out or was tired, I just thought of my sister."**

"She had battled a few health problems over the years but had powered through and was in a good place. But, in October 2019, she suffered two strokes and sadly passed away after battling on

for nearly a week in the ICU at Glasgow Royal Infirmary.

"My nephew Conner, Claire's son, has been incredible throughout all this. He is developing into such an amazing young man, and that is all to his mother's credit. I felt that my sister's memory should live on, and if I could raise some money for charity and raise awareness of strokes in young adults, then all the better."

Kenny came up with the idea of walking 5k a day but didn't tell anyone beforehand of his plans for the December challenge.

He admits: "I'm not the fittest person and certainly not the most outdoorsy, so it seemed like a good

thing to do that would test me and I would also get something out of it. My wife Stacey and our French bulldog Dave joined me on a lot of the walks."

"On days I struggled to get out or was tired, I just thought of my sister. Claire would have laughed at the thought of me walking out in the snow and rain!"

Kenny says the family are very close and, although still devastated by Claire's loss, they have become even closer. Her son Conner, 21, and their dog Peeps now live with Claire's mum Maureen.

Friends and family gave Kenny's daily 5k challenge their full support, and he has been blown away by the amount raised.

He says: "I was totally overwhelmed by the donations, and I am grateful for everyone who took the time to give something, especially at Christmas time."

"I think Claire would have been really proud of me and probably a bit embarrassed at the thought of all these people donating for her. She was a brilliant person."

Lauren Mackenzie, Community & Events Fundraiser at Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, said: "We want to say a massive thank you to Kenny and anyone who has supported him so far."

**If you'd like to raise funds for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, visit [www.chss.org.uk/fundraising](http://www.chss.org.uk/fundraising)**

## A LEGACY OF HOPE

**HOW LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL CAN HELP CHEST HEART & STROKE SCOTLAND CHANGE LIVES**



**PAULA**



**Give the gift of a lifetime and help change lives by naming Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland in your Will.**

Small or large, a gift in your Will means we can keep doing our vital work of helping survivors and their families now and in the future.

A gift in your Will means people like Paula, a stroke survivor, can now work with Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland to help people who have suffered in the same way.

Last year we received more than £2 million in gifts in wills, money that means we can be there for people with chest, heart and stroke conditions during one of the most difficult years any of us have had to face.

A gift in your Will can make a difference. And ensure your legacy of kindness and generosity lives on.

Paula was just 29 years old when she had a stroke. As a young mum, instead of enjoying life with her child, Paula was left fighting for her life.

She says: "When I eventually woke, I couldn't move, and it was a struggle to speak. Even though I survived, I felt like I had lost a piece of myself."

"I lost hugs with my two-year-old son after my stroke. I lost our family walks on the beach every Sunday. I lost me."

"Some days I wanted life to just stop. I thought there was no future for me. I was so scared. But after time, I found strength. It took years, and there were so many setbacks, frustrations and battles."

"I've managed to rebuild my life, and that's why I'm now so proud to work for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland helping survivors like me. But I'm only able to do that because of donations from caring people."

It is fitting that Paula is the face of our appeal to you to leave a gift in your Will to Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. Because Paula knows

first-hand just how vital such a lasting legacy can be and what a difference it can make to people's lives.

She says: "A gift in your will is a gift to every recovery, every moment shared, every hug with your loved ones, every step forward, every glimmer of hope for anyone in Scotland who is affected by chest, heart and stroke conditions."

"For me, your kindness means I can hug my son again, read him a bedtime story and feel like me again. Your kindness gave me back my life, my family."

**"A gift in your Will is something truly wonderful - the kindest gift you will ever give."**

"A gift like this will mean people can continue to make lasting moments in the future."

"A gift in your Will is something truly wonderful - the kindest gift you will ever give."

*\*To talk to us about leaving a gift in your will or to find out more about legacy giving, please call Morag Fleming on 07759-839380 or email [Morag.Fleming@chss.org.uk](mailto:Morag.Fleming@chss.org.uk)*



# YOUR BIG EFFORTS ARE MAKING A BIG DIFFERENCE

Highland News & Media Ltd 01

**YOU CAN BE A FUNDRAISING HERO LIKE KIERAN.**  
Sign up for your own challenge  
[www.chss.org.uk/fundraising](http://www.chss.org.uk/fundraising)

## 'This one's for you, Dad'

**Kieran raised £1,900 in Christmas Eve marathon challenge after his father had a stroke**

**For years, Kieran Fraser and his dad Neil planned to run a marathon together. But when Neil suffered a stroke at the age of just 52 in September 2021, Kieran decided to run the marathon on his own – and raised thousands for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.**

The 21-year-old, from Inverness, completed his epic challenge on Christmas Eve and has so far raised £1,900 from supporters.

The final-year student at Aberdeen University had just returned to university in September when he got the worrying news from home about his Dad. He was able to see his Dad immediately

being there for him. But I never forgot about our plans to run a marathon one day. So I decided that it was something I could do to help not only him but many other families who have been going through the same thing.

"I wanted to raise funds for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. My Granny has had two strokes, and I know the charity has really helped her and how much she appreciates their help."

The Fraser men are both huge sports fans, particularly football, and have travelled all over the UK to watch games. They have shared walks and runs with their collie Corran and talked of their dream to

"But we still talked about this run, we never gave up on our dream. I had to run through the pain barrier, but that was nothing compared to the pain thousands of families go through every year.

"So, Dad, this one's for you!" Kieran chose to run on Christmas Eve because of how important that day is to families.

He explained: "I've always been taught that Christmas is a time for family. All our family and friends have been amazing and supported us all, and that means a lot. It's support like this that keeps me going when I run, that and thoughts of my Dad."

Jane-Claire Judson, Chief executive at Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, thanked Kieran for his tremendous fundraising efforts, saying: "It's people like Kieran, who take on these amazing challenges, that make an enormous difference to those living in Scotland with chest, heart and stroke conditions.

"The money raised from Kieran's marathon will ensure that people and their families get the right help and support when they need it most. Thank you so much to Kieran and everyone who supported him. We are extremely grateful for your efforts."

**"I had to run through the pain barrier, but that was nothing compared to the pain thousands of families go through every year."**

after the stroke, but Covid-19 restrictions have kept them apart for months.

Kieran said: "It's been a very difficult time for us all, but as Dad slowly improves, so do we in the hope he will make a full recovery.

"Not being able to visit has been difficult for me, and I have felt very helpless not

complete a marathon together many times.

Kieran said: "It was something we wanted to do together. We were both really fit. I was playing football four or five times a week, but I tore a cartilage in my right knee. Then Dad injured his back. So any plans to run had to be put on hold while we recovered.



## EPIC VIRTUAL CYCLE CHALLENGE RAISES £5K

**STROKE SURVIVOR SCOTT HUTCHINSON LEADS TEAM IN THANK YOU TO CHEST HEART & STROKE SCOTLAND**

**Keen cyclist Scott Hutchinson couldn't wait to get back on his bike after surviving a stroke in 2017.**

And in January 2021, his team of 10 dedicated cyclists – named Scott's Spokes Against Strokes – braved an epic virtual cycle challenge that raised an amazing £5,000 for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.

The team took on online cycling app's Zwift's toughest test of distance and climbing – the daunting 129km Uber Pretzel. It took the team six hours to complete the challenge, raising an incredible £5,000 to help stroke survivors in Scotland rebuild their lives.

Scott, 47, of Dunfermline, had a stroke in 2017 and turned to Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland for help and support in his recovery. Spokes

Against Strokes was his way of saying thank you to the charity of which he is now a trustee.

He said: "I knew of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland professionally, so that was one of the immediate places I went, and they just had rafts of information. The help, guidance and support they provide is a lifeline for recovery."

Of the cycle challenge, Scott said: "Riding 129km in normal, outside conditions is challenging enough, but to do it indoors on a turbo trainer is a different level. I'm absolutely blown away by the efforts of the team. Everyone put their heart and soul into the ride.

"Huge thanks also to members of Dunfermline Cycling Club whose members joined us to support us and to those who contributed to the campaign."