

P-05-763 Introduce updated stroke advice – B.E.F.A.S.T. – and help save lives and livelihoods

This petition was submitted by Phillip Easton, having collected 105 signatures online.

Petition text:

We the undersigned request the Welsh Assembly to review the stroke advice currently given to healthcare professionals and in other marketing literature. At the moment this follows FAST – Face, Arms, Speech, Time. Some parts of the brain affected by stroke don't deal with any of those functions, so adding Balance and Eyes to create BEFAST will cover much more.

My brain lesion indicating a cerebellar stroke was found incidentally during an MRI for a different reason. This explains the sudden vertigo I experienced over a year previously. Had this been recognised by the multiple medical professionals I saw I could have received stroke treatment immediately and the extent of brain damage may have been avoided. Had I known about it as a member of the public I would have been aware of the risks of my symptoms. Stanford University has been advising BEFAST for years: <http://scopeblog.stanford.edu/2014/05/02/be-fast-learn-to-recognize-the-signs-of-stroke/>

Additional information:

My personal story is that I live alone, and I suffered a sudden and intense bout of vertigo in early December 2015. I was in bed for three whole days and was unable to move to eat, drink, or anything else. Had I known this could have been a stroke I would have called an ambulance immediately. I recovered enough to work again, and about a week later I suffered another bout in public – an ambulance was called. This calmed down far quicker, but a paramedic was still with me for an hour before booking me an appointment with my doctor that evening. At this time I had a further episode as I was entering the hospital where my doctor was sited at the time. I was unable to work at all for at least a month after this. After several visits to the doctor over the next three months I was finally referred to ENT for vertigo as my symptoms weren't going away as hoped. In late January 2017 I was finally allowed an MRI for lingering ear pain and was checked for infection. As a consequence, evidence of a stroke was found – I was told this on 14th February 2017. More than 15 months after my first symptoms.

I am still unable to work full time hours, and am still undergoing tests with regards to the cause of the stroke. It's possible that the first incidences were TIAs and the full stroke that caused lasting damage was only the last one – after the paramedic saw me. We cannot know if I would definitely have been saved these issues if the condition was caught earlier – even if I'd just started taking daily aspirin at the first sign to thin my blood (a common procedure after suspected TIA). We do know that without that advice, I have definitely suffered brain damage.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cynon Valley
- South Wales Central