28 April 2020

**Baroness Karren Brady supports the Stroke Association’s appeal for ad space**

The Stroke Association is asking brands and organisations with upcoming television or radio advertising space to consider **donating airtime** in the month of May and June, so that they can **maintain awareness of stroke throughout the pandemic**.

The charity’s recent press campaign ‘Stroke is an emergency during Covid-19’ encourages people to call 999 when they see or experience the signs of stroke. The news story revealed that fears over contracting coronavirus and not wanting to burden the NHS, are preventing people from seeking the emergency help they need. The success of this campaign saw stroke being referenced in the Government’s daily coronavirus update, as well as being reported across many print, broadcast and online media outlets. It is crucial to maintain the understanding that stroke is a medical emergency and dialling 999 is a necessity to reduce long term disability or death.

The UK’s leading stroke charity will use any donations of ad space to amplify their Rebuilding Lives campaign, which they plan to launch on 1 May, but they are having to do so with a reduced budget as a result of a dramatic reduction in charitable donations. The Rebuilding Lives TV advert recently came second in the Charity Film of the Year category at the Charity Film Awards and won the People’s Choice vote in its turnover category.

Some hospitals have also highlighted that stroke patients are currently being discharged from hospital beds sooner than normal as a precaution against coronavirus. However, with the UK in lockdown, this has meant that people are returning home without access to the support they need, which is jeopardising their recoveries. This in turn could see many more people returning to hospital unnecessarily and increasing pressure on the NHS’s already overstretched resources.

The Stroke Association is now working closer than ever with the NHS to try and help alleviate this pressure and prevent another crisis situation from developing. Among the proposals, the charity wants to ensure that those patients who leave hospital during lockdown, don’t feel abandoned. Larger organisations or companies can help the charity achieve one important goal by donating any ad space, to keep stroke a priority in people’s minds.

**Dominic Brand, Executive Director of External Affairs says: “It’s really important that we all pull together to help support our NHS at this time.** We’re working with NHS England to keep the message that stroke is still an emergency during Covid-19 in people’s minds. We are hoping that message will have an impact and more people will call 999 when they see the signs of stroke. But we can’t stop there. Nobody should ever feel abandoned after stroke and that’s why we’re asking for your help. There are **some essential health messages that we need to deliver**, but unfortunately, due to a dramatic reduction in charitable donations we worry that they will not be heard. As a charity, we’re committed to reaching more stroke survivors than we ever did before to offer our support. Rightly so, that’s where we’re investing our limited resources.

“It might be that your company purchased some ad space months ago and is now unable to use it for whatever reason. It could be that you bought a package of space and would be able to donate one of your slots. We need to be on TV and radio and with your help we can ensure that stroke is a priority and help stroke survivors rebuild their lives when they leave hospital.”

Stroke Association Ambassador **Baroness Brady (Karren Brady)** said: “It’s great that more people than ever are staying home to help prevent the spread of coronavirus. However, instead of seeking help for stroke when it strikes people are avoiding calling 999. This could be due to fear of the coronavirus.

“The Stroke Association needs you to help them keep stroke at the front of people’s minds. Their ability to raise funds is significantly impacted, so it’s time for businesses to step in and help. If you have any upcoming advertising space that you can donate to help this wonderful charity, you’ll be doing a vital service to make more people aware of the importance of stroke. The Stroke Association is providing even more support for stroke survivors and has also stepped in to help the ease the strain on the NHS, but now they need your help. Please do get in touch if you can support.”

**Marketing departments can help by donating their unusable ad space or one of their slots to the Stroke Association’s Rebuilding Lives campaign.**

Contact rebuildinglives@stroke.org.uk for more info or visit <https://strk.org.uk/2S1lUF0>

**ends**

Press enquiries: scott.weddell@stroke.org.uk

**Notes to Editors**

* Stroke strikes every five minutes in the UK and it changes lives in an instant.
* The Stroke Association is a charity working across the UK to support people to rebuild their lives after stroke. We believe that everyone deserves to live the best life they can after stroke. From local support services and groups, to online information and support, anyone affected by stroke can visit stroke.org.uk or call our dedicated Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100 to find out about support available locally.
* Our specialist support, research and campaigning are only possible with the courage and determination of the stroke community and the generosity of our supporters. With more donations and support, we can help rebuild even more lives.
* You can follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/TheStrokeAssoc), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/TheStrokeAssociation/) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/thestrokeassociation/?hl=en).