News Release

**February 2017**

**Celebrities and survivors share personal stroke stories to remind people to Act F.A.S.T.**

* Stroke survivor, radio DJ Mark Goodier, and TV presenter, Anna Richardson, whose father had a stroke, tell their personal stories in new Act F.A.S.T. films
* Family, friends and strangers are urged to call 999 as soon as they notice any single one of the three key signs of a stroke: Face, Arms, Speech
* The stories bring to life how disability can be greatly reduced when people Act F.A.S.T. and urgently get medical help
* The films also challenge us to overcome the concerns and fears many of us experience when faced with an emergency
* The films are released as part of Public Health England’s Act F.A.S.T. campaign

Public Health England, supported by the Stroke Association, has released a series of moving films, as part of the national Act F.A.S.T. campaign, to help raise awareness of the vital role anyone can play when they see someone having a stroke.

The films feature famous faces alongside stroke survivors, a psychologist and healthcare professionals, describing the common signs of stroke and highlighting why people need to think and Act F.A.S.T. and call 999 if they notice any single one of the three key signs of a stroke: Face, Arms, Speech.

One film tells the story of two very different stroke survivors. The story of Carolyn, who recovered well after her stroke, is contrasted with that of Steve, who has been left with life-changing disabilities. The difference in their recovery was down to how quickly 999 was called.

Radio DJ Mark Goodier, who had a stroke last November, tells how he lost the feeling in one side of his face and how his family recognised the signs so called 999 immediately. Because of their fast reaction, he was treated quickly and three months later, Mark is recovering well and returned to work this month (February). Mark wants to highlight the vital role anyone can play in helping to save lives or preventing severe disability.

Presenter and journalist, Anna Richardson, shares the story of her father who had a stroke a few years ago. He was unable to make the call himself but was able to contact a neighbour who immediately recognised the symptoms and called 999. Again his neighbour’s fast response meant Anna’s father recovered quickly and avoided permanent disability.

Psychologist,Dr Lasana Harris has highlighted the concerns and fears some people have to acting fast in an emergency because they may worry that they do not have the person’s permission to interfere. Dr Harris stresses that a stroke is a medical emergency and people need to act fast regardless.

New statistics reveal that a stroke kills over 40,000 people a year and almost two thirds leave hospital with a disability. With over 100,000 strokes a year in the UK, the new Act FAST films are encouraging everyone – whether they are a stranger in the street, a family member at home or the person themselves – not to ignore the key symptoms and to call 999 immediately if they notice even one of them. Getting appropriate treatment can reduce the amount of brain damage and ensure a better chance of making a good recovery.

Think FAST:

* **Face** - has their face fallen on one side? Can they smile?
* **Arms** - can they raise both arms and keep them there?
* **Speech** - is their speech slurred?
* **Time** – to call 999 if you see any single one of these signs of a stroke

For further information including leaflets in alternative formats search **‘Act FAST’**.

**Mark Goodier, former Radio 1 DJ, said:**

“When I had my stroke last year, my wife recognised straight away and called 999. She acted incredibly quickly. She didn't wait to worry about it or wonder. She knew she had to act fast. I consider myself fortunate because she did the right thing, at the right time.

“I’m still coming to terms with what’s happened, but I'm a very positive person and I’m gradually building up the exercise again. I’m back at work and things are slowly becoming normal again. It’s going to take time, but my story could have been very different if she hadn’t made the call when she did.”

**Anna Richardson, journalist and TV presenter, comments:**

“My dad's friend noticed immediately that he was having a stroke. She called 999 straight away, and for that reason she saved my dad's life and it certainly made the difference in his rehabilitation. I’d urge everyone to be aware of the symptoms of stroke and, more importantly, to act as soon as they see any of the signs in someone. The faster you act, the better their chances of a good recovery.”

**Dr Lasana Harris comments:**

“We always look to make sense of a situation and even if someone appears to be having a stroke we may worry about causing offence or mutual embarrassment. If no one else acts, then we ourselves may not see it as an emergency.

“However, the imagined consequences of action are minor compared to the consequences of inaction when someone is having a stroke, so act first and worry later.”

**Juliet Bouverie, Chief Executive, Stroke Association said**:

“Anyone can have a stroke and one occurs every five minutes in the UK. As a leading cause of death and disability in this country, it is clearly a medical emergency.

“Acting fast makes a huge difference; you are more likely to survive a stroke, and make a better recovery, if the call to 999 is made without delay if any single symptom is spotted. The faster you act, the better the chances of a good recovery. Search ‘Act FAST’ for more information.”

**Notes to Editors**

1. The Act F.A.S.T. campaign videos and pictures can be found via this dropbox link: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/bx31ohmayyr03fg/AAA2_rMzRV8KzluAQz9BFIela?dl=0>
2. The Act F.A.S.T. campaign is running nationally from 2 February to April 2017. The campaign includes advertising on TV, radio, bus interior posters and digital, supporting PR and a social media drive.
   1. Website: [www.nhs.uk/actfast](http://www.nhs.uk/actfast)
   2. Twitter: @ActFAST999
   3. Facebook: [**www.facebook.com/ActFAST999**](http://www.facebook.com/ActFAST999)
3. Think and Act F.A.S.T:

* Face - has their face fallen on one side? Can they smile?
* Arms – can they raise both arms and keep them there?
* Speech – is their speech slurred?
* Time to call 999 if you see any single one of these signs of a stroke

1. Additional symptoms of stroke and mini stroke can include

* Sudden loss of vision or blurred vision in one or both eyes
* Sudden weakness or numbness on one side of the body
* Sudden memory loss or confusion
* Sudden dizziness, unsteadiness or a sudden fall, especially with any of the other symptoms

1. A stroke is a brain attack that happens when the blood supply to the brain is cut off, caused by a clot or bleeding in the brain. There are around 100,000 strokes in the UK every year and it is the leading cause of severe adult disability. There are over 1.2 million people in the UK living with the effects of stroke
2. A mini stroke is also known as a transient ischaemic attack (TIA). It is caused by a temporary disruption in the blood supply to part of the brain
3. Public Health England exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health. Website: [www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe). Twitter: [@PHE\_uk](https://twitter.com/PHE_uk), Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland](http://www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland)

1. 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](http://www.stroke.org.uk)
2. For more information please contact [stroke@freuds.com](mailto:stroke@freuds.com)

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