



Return to work After stroke (RETAK)

October 2019 Newsletter



University of Nottingham

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RETAK: The Return to Work After Stroke Trial

What is RETAK?

The Return to Work After Stroke trial (RETAK) is a definitive, randomised control trial designed to test whether an early, stroke specific vocational rehabilitation intervention, plus usual care, is more effective at getting people back to work after their stroke than usual care alone. The intervention was developed in Nottingham and is being delivered in 16 NHS sites around the UK so far.

Good News:

Martin Coult, in conjunction with the Ossie Newell Foundation and members of the research team, is developing a website with resources to help employers support their employees in their return to work after stroke.

SPOTLIGHT ON: Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) in RETAK

Our RETAK PPI partners are 'experts by experience'. This strengthens our research. We involved PPI as co-applicants on the RETAK grant application; two sit on the Trial Steering Committee and two assist in running the trial as members of the Trial Management Group. The PPI partners wanted to meet together to discuss RETAK, thus a larger PPI group was formed, which meets 2-3 times per year. Apart from advising on day to day delivery, our partners have;

- ◆ Reviewed all participant-facing documentation.
- ◆ Written to key decision makers in the National Institute for Health Research and NHS England about problems caused when a new Excess Treatment Cost process was introduced in October 2018. The responses have helped us open new sites and advise our clinical partners.
- ◆ Advised on interview questions and topic guides for interviews with stroke survivors and occupational therapists about their experiences of taking part in RETAK.
- ◆ Developed an employer-focused website to communicate our research findings and host resources for employers.

We asked PPI partners, 'Why did you become involved in RETAK?'

'I got involved in the hope that in the future people would get the help that I did not get'.

'I wanted to take part in the RETAK trial committee, because I after I had my stroke, I felt I received little or no help from professionals with regards to returning to work'.

Study Update:

306 participants recruited so far– well done recruitment teams! 16 sites are delivering the intervention and we are looking for more.

We are training new therapists to deliver the intervention and holding 'top-up' training sessions for therapists already trained.

Participant and carer follow-up is in full-swing and our response rates are looking good. RETAK researchers ring to remind and assist those who have not completed and returned questionnaires. Participants who complete and return 12-month questionnaires receive a £20 shopping voucher as a 'Thank-you'. We hope this will improve returns!

Our PPI partners continually offer constructive feedback to improve and support the study. Here are a few of their suggestions....

Our PPI group suggested we...	So we...
Change recruitment materials to be more inclusive for people with aphasia.	Developed aphasia-friendly recruitment materials.
Give potential participants more time to decide to be involved in the trial.	Asked our recruitment teams to follow up with potential participants closer to the 8-week
Offer training to our recruitment teams to give them the confidence to approach stroke survivors who have had severe strokes.	Spoke with and provided resources for recruitment teams and set up regular teleconferences across teams to share best practice.