

POLICY BRIEF

LIVING WELL WITH
APHASIA IN IRELAND

APHASIA-FRIENDLY
SUMMARY



BACKGROUND

- **Aphasia** is a **language** and **communication impairment** after brain injury and stroke.
- It can affect **speaking, understanding, reading** and **writing**.
- **One third** of people with **stroke** have aphasia.
- **People with aphasia** are often left out of stroke studies.
- This means that **there is not enough evidence** around supporting people with aphasia after a stroke.
- More **working-aged people** are having strokes.
- It is important to ask working-aged **people with aphasia what helps** them to live well.
- We **need to know what helps** so that we can **plan better support**.



WHAT DID WE DO?

- We **worked with people with aphasia** at all stages of the research.
- This helped to make the research about **things that are important to people with aphasia**.
- This also helped to make the research **aphasia-friendly**.
- The project had 4 studies. These are **shown below**.

We looked at **other studies** about things like **living well** and **experiences of services**.



STUDY 1

We surveyed Speech Therapists about **services** in Ireland.



STUDY 2

STUDY 3

STUDY 4



We made **recommendations** about **improving support services**.



We **interviewed people with aphasia** (of working age) to find out **what helps living well**.

WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

Living well with aphasia is made easier by...



1) Aphasia-friendly health services.



2) Information about aphasia.



3) Being valued in society.

WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

Living well with aphasia is made easier by...



1) Aphasia-friendly health services.

These include:

- Support **in the long-term** after a stroke.
- Support for **families + children** of people with aphasia.
- **Counselling** or emotional support.
- **Speech therapy**.
- **Key-workers** and home help.

Aphasia can make it **harder to get support**. So, at all stages of recovery, people with aphasia need:

- **Advocacy** and **stroke liaison support**.
- **Healthcare staff** to know about aphasia.
- **Information** about services.

WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

Living well with aphasia is made easier by...



2) Information about **aphasia**.

- **Knowing about aphasia** is important for people with aphasia (and their families).
- Some people with aphasia (and families) will still need information **years after stroke**.
- **Meeting others living with aphasia** may help people with aphasia (and families) to learn about it.

WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

Living well with aphasia is made easier by...



3) Being **valued** in society.

Being **part of the community** is an important part of living well with aphasia. This can include:

- Opportunities for **paid employment** and **return to work**.
- **Volunteering** and **helping others**.
- Further **education** and **training**.
- **Raising awareness** of aphasia.
- **Political lobbying**.
- **Stroke** and **aphasia groups** and **organisations**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At all stages of recovery, people with aphasia should:

- 1)** Be **included** in stroke research, policy and services.
- 2)** Be seen by **healthcare staff** trained in **aphasia communication**.
- 3)** Be linked with a **stroke liaison worker**.
- 4)** Have high-quality **information on living well with aphasia in Ireland**.
- 5)** Have access to aphasia-friendly **counselling and emotional care** (and for families).
- 6)** Have opportunities for **training** and **paid employment**.
- 7)** Have access to **Speech Therapy** to help them to be a valued part of the community.

THE RESEARCH TEAM

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