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Health

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# A doctor's view on stroke care

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**IN the fifth of our features to mark Wigan support group Think Ahead's Raising Awareness Week, we talk to Dr Andy Sutton about how to prevent strokes and the help available.**

As there are more than 1,000 new stroke sufferers in the borough each year, Dr Sutton, a GP Commissioner for the Wigan Borough CCG, claims that most attacks could be preventable if people lead a healthier lifestyle.

He said: "There is a higher incidence of strokes in the Wigan borough - a large proportion of which is preventable."

"Lifestyle choices such as lack of exercise, obesity, smoking and heavy drinking and diseases including diabetes and heart issues are all very important risk factors in in-

creasing the chances regardless of age.

"The most dangerous part of a stroke - in terms of physical damage - is within the first few hours.

"However, that doesn't mean that care should end once a patient is discharged; a stroke survivor needs to receive further care to ensure that the best quality of life for them is achievable."

Dr Sutton is now working closely with Think Ahead Stroke Support Group to provide expert advice on leading a healthy and active life and how they can rehabilitate themselves.

He said: "I first met Think Ahead in my role as GP Com-

**'Higher incidence of stroke in Wigan'**

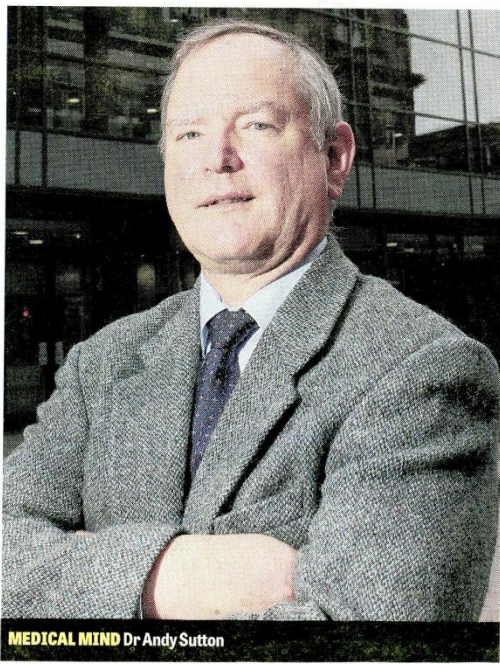
missioner. It is very active in the Wigan borough, and has a great history of rehabilitating and caring for survivors long after their initial illness has passed.

"The non-medical care provided by Think Ahead Community Stroke Group is incredibly important.

"The group's peer support network is able to help people adjust to a life after their illness via those who have been through the process themselves.

"Whilst a lot of medical care is provided by the NHS, charities such as Think Ahead are able to plug the gaps and support survivors both physically and mentally, making the care they provide incredibly important to the ongoing quality of life for survivors."

For more information on Think Ahead Stroke Group, visit the new information centre at Ashland House, Manchester Road, Ince, log onto [www.think-ahead.org.uk](http://www.think-ahead.org.uk) or call 01942 824 888.



MEDICAL MIND Dr Andy Sutton



**Watch out for the tell-tale signs**

- THE NHS has a FAST campaign to warn people of the signs to watch for:
- FACE - Does the face look uneven? Can the person smile?
- ARMS - Can they raise both arms?
- SPEECH - Is it slurred?
- TELEPHONE - Call 999 if any of these signs occur.