

# My Life After Stroke (MLAS)

## Facilitator Role - Further Information

### IPCAS trial in more detail

The “My Life After Stroke” (MLAS) programme forms part of the “Improving Primary Care After Stroke” (IPCAS) randomised controlled trial. We are hoping to start recruiting participants for this trial in March 2018. This trial will be delivered in two regions, the East of England (EoE) and East Midlands. Our total recruitment target is 920 stroke survivors. Half of these (460) will be from GP surgeries in the EoE. Each GP surgery will be randomised to the intervention or control group of the trial, to achieve a target of 230 participants in each group.

Once a participant is enrolled in the trial, participants in the intervention group will attend a stroke review with the Practice Nurse at their GP surgery. Participants attending a stroke review will be offered information and the option to take part in MLAS by their Practice Nurse. Taking part in MLAS is optional, so not all participants will choose to attend the sessions. We estimate that a maximum of 25 MLAS programmes will be run in the EoE. Each programme will contain a maximum of 8 stroke survivors (and their carers where necessary) and be delivered by two facilitators. All sessions will be held at a suitable local community facility.

The MLAS course will consist of the following:

- One 45 minute individual preparatory appointment. This consists of a one to one session with a facilitator and a survivor (+/- carer).
- Four weekly 2.5 hour group-based sessions. These sessions cover topics under the categories of stroke prevention, information, social needs and psychological issues.
- One final 30 min individual appointment 4 weeks after the last group session.

### Background and aims of the MLAS programme

Research shows that people who have had a stroke seek to maximise their well-being and quality of life by:

- Bringing about social well-being and integration (e.g. eliciting support from friends and family).
- Having a level of understanding of, and capacity to manage, their emotional responses to living with stroke.
- Maximising their own physical potential (including cognitive and sensory abilities).
- Minimising their risk of another stroke.

Therefore the aims of MLAS are to assist participants to:

- Acknowledge and adjust to the new realities of their situation, including their emotional responses.
- Set themselves new and realistic challenges including reducing their risk of a further stroke.
- Increase their confidence in their abilities and skills to take on new challenges.
- Encourage the participants to feel hopeful that they can achieve the aims they set themselves.

The role of an MLAS facilitator is to:

- Demonstrate a curious, non-judgemental approach towards participants.
- Skilfully support participants to explore their personal thoughts and feelings.
- Avoid giving specific advice and instead support participants to develop their own solutions and strategies to the challenges they face.
- Facilitate the groups' awareness of sources of support and information.
- Promote the sharing of knowledge and ideas between the participants and sign post when appropriate.

### **Time commitment for facilitators:**

As an MLAS facilitator, your role would be to deliver MLAS sessions in the EoE. This covers Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

As we will need to wait for enough interested participants to form a group, the MLAS programmes will most likely start from July 2018. We estimate that MLAS will continue to run until the end of 2019 depending on recruitment rates. You will be asked to help deliver around 6 MLAS programmes in this time.

For facilitators, each MLAS programme will involve a weekly commitment of at least 3.5 hours per week for a period of 5 weeks. Each programme will then involve an additional session 4 weeks later. You will also need to spend time preparing for the sessions and practicing the course content with your co-facilitator.

We do not anticipate that facilitators will be involved with more than one programme at any given time. However, we do hope that the same pair of facilitators will deliver all sessions in each programme (subject to illness etc.) in order to keep continuity for patients. We will aim to arrange MLAS programmes to suit the needs of our facilitators however, the session dates will be subject to participant availability. Therefore, a degree of flexibility would be an advantage if you are considering becoming a facilitator.

In addition to delivering the MLAS sessions themselves, facilitators will be asked to attend an informal interview with the trial team here in Cambridge. This is a chance for you to find out more about the trial and for us to explore the background of those interested in taking part. It is useful for us to know the skillset of each facilitator as we will aim to pair co-facilitators with complementary expertise. We hope to hold these interviews in April or May 2018.

Once you have confirmed your involvement in the trial, you will be asked to attend three facilitator training days. These will be delivered by our colleagues in Leicester who have developed the MLAS programme and will most likely be held at the Leicester Diabetes Centre (Leicester General Hospital). We hope to hold these training days in May or June 2018.

## Other requirements

As MLAS forms part of a research study, there may be some additional paperwork that you need to complete in order to gain permission to deliver the programme. This is an ethical requirement and may depend on your current role (e.g. whether or not you are an NHS employee). The research team will control this process and guide you through what is required.

## Payment

As a facilitator you will be paid for your time and travel expenses.

The method of payment is still being finalised and again may depend on your current professional role. Payment for MLAS facilitators will most likely be around £15.94 per hour however the exact rate has not yet been confirmed.

The costs of venue hire and all other supporting resources will be covered by the research team. There may be occasions where you need to buy perishable resources for the sessions (e.g. milk) and the cost of this will also be reimbursed.

## Next steps

If you are interested in taking part we will add your name and contact details to a list of potential facilitators. We will then contact you in a few months' time to arrange a date for your informal interview.

If you have any questions about becoming a facilitator please let us know.

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