# **Online brain injury and stroke support scheme receives additional funding**

An online brain injury support scheme to help brain injury and stroke survivors has been boosted with additional funding, enabling people across Lancashire and South Cumbria to continue accessing therapy and support from home.

The Lancashire and South Cumbria Neuro-Rehabilitation On-Line (NROL) programme, which is hosted by East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust (ELHT) and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) uses online video sessions to provide specialist group neuro-rehabilitation to brain injury and stroke survivors.

The scheme was created in the winter of 2020/21 because patients were limited in accessing face to face NHS treatment due to COVID restrictions. An additional £169,000 secured from NHS England’s Stroke Quality Improvement Rehabilitation (SQuIRe) catalyst funding process will enable this vital resource to continue for a further 12 months.

The sessions illustrate how ELHT is developing a hospital without walls, with care being provided in a place and at a time convenient to patients rather than within the traditional confines of a hospital building. Attending a hospital appointment is not always easy for patients due to the cost of transport, caring responsibilities and fitting appointments around work.

One patient whom the sessions have benefitted is 33-year-old Alyssa Havko, who was diagnosed with a brain tumour when she was young. Sadly, the shunt in Alyssa’s head stopped working in Christmas 2021 and she had to undergo surgery to fix it, with a long-recovery period needed for physical and speech and language therapy. After recovery in hospital, she was referred to the NROL service to continue her therapy at home.

The county-wide scheme which began in ELHT involves physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, speech and language therapists and assistant practitioners from ELHT, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust and Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, after it was rolled out across Lancashire and South Cumbria thanks to new funding earlier this year.

By February this year, the programme had reached 2,000 patients and these stories highlight. NROL is delivering extra therapy to a range of patients of different ages and backgrounds, and it is enabling the Trust to create a very exciting community of practice amongst stroke and neurorehabilitation therapists, embracing ways of working collaboratively across organisational boundaries. The team is having discussions with other commissioning colleagues to look both to sustain and grow this approach across our Integrated Care Board and potentially further.