

GUIDE TO RUNNING A LOCAL **F.A.S.T.** CAMPAIGN

The Irish Heart Foundation and Stroke

Since 1966, the Irish Heart Foundation has been working to reduce premature death and disability from stroke and heart disease.

In April 2008, the Irish Heart Foundation published the first ever National Audit of Stroke Care in Ireland. The Audit was the country's first official overview of stroke services in hospitals and in the community. Its findings confirmed that services for stroke patients in Ireland were vastly inadequate and that people were dying or acquiring disabilities which, with better services, could have been avoided.

In 2009, the Irish Heart Foundation launched a 4-year Stroke Action campaign for better stroke services in Ireland. Stroke services in Ireland are lagging way behind those in other countries. Better services could save lives and improve recovery rates for patients. The campaign is working to increase public and political awareness of stroke and the need for improved services.

The Irish Heart Foundation is asking people to join this campaign urging the Government to implement the measures that will eliminate avoidable death and disability from stroke. To join the campaign, please log on to www.stroke.ie.

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F.A.S.T.

Follow these steps to identify the warning signs for stroke and act F.A.S.T

Face has their face fallen on one side? Can they smile?

Arms can they raise both arms and keep them there?

Speech is their speech slurred?

Time to call 999 if you see any single one of these signs.

We need to:

- Act F.A.S.T. to save lives.
- Remember that time lost is brain lost.
- Know stroke is a medical emergency.

If you recognise ANY of the symptoms of stroke call 999 immediately.

This campaign kit contains everything you need to run a local F.A.S.T. stroke awareness campaign

This campaign kit contains everything you need to run a local F.A.S.T. (Face, Arm, Speech, Time) stroke awareness campaign:

- All your campaign materials
- Advice on how to get started
- Contact details for the Advocacy Team in the Irish Heart Foundation which can support you all the way
- A checklist to guide you as you run your campaign

Why do we need F.A.S.T. campaigns?

Stroke is a medical emergency. If you see any of the warning signs of stroke you need to call 999 immediately.

F.A.S.T. refers to the main symptoms of stroke – Facial weakness, Arm weakness and Speech problems, along with the warning that it's Time to call 999.

The average stroke destroys around 2 million brain cells every minute. This is why people use the phrase, 'time is brain'. The longer a person has to wait before treatment, the more their brain may be affected by the stroke. When a stroke occurs people need to act F.A.S.T. to save lives.

People don't know they need to act F.A.S.T. for stroke

Research shows that less than 50% of Irish people would ring 999 if they thought they were having a stroke. And almost two-thirds cannot name more than one stroke warning sign.

In most developed countries, Governments have run F.A.S.T. awareness campaigns that have saved countless lives. But no such campaign has been run in Ireland. The Irish Heart Foundation is about to change that by launching a national F.A.S.T. campaign.

The Irish Heart Foundation really appreciates your help in spreading the F.A.S.T. message. By participating in this campaign you will help save lives and reduce disability from stroke! We hope to increase awareness to the signs of stroke by at least 50%.

Acting F.A.S.T. in your local area



The Irish Heart Foundation's national F.A.S.T. campaign

This pack is designed to give you the tools and the materials you will need to run your local F.A.S.T. campaign.

We want the F.A.S.T. message to dominate the airwaves and be seen and heard by as many people across the country as possible.

The F.A.S.T. campaign will be the BIGGEST national media campaign the Irish Heart Foundation has ever run. It will include TV and radio advertising, as well as online and direct marketing.

We will have a high profile national launch and will use electronic media to promote the F.A.S.T. message on our websites www.stroke.ie and www.irishheart.ie and on our Facebook page [Stroke.ie](https://www.facebook.com/Stroke.ie).

We will also be sending F.A.S.T. publicity materials (posters, leaflets, etc.) across the country to stroke organisations, older persons' organisations, community organisations, health organisations, businesses, disability organisations, local and national politicians and political parties.

The F.A.S.T. campaign aims to target audiences of all ages because anyone can call 999 if they suspect someone is having a stroke.

Local Campaigns – what are they?

The Irish Heart Foundation hopes that groups interested in stroke will run a number of local F.A.S.T. campaigns. This will reinforce the national campaign in local areas.

A local campaign can be run by an individual or a group and can be as big or small as you want. Campaigns can be run out of a hospital, by a stroke support group or by anyone who wants to help us spread this message.

We think it would be a good idea if the local campaigns start roughly 1-2 weeks after the national media campaign starts.

Local campaigns are like information groups where members try and spread the F.A.S.T. message to all parts of their community.

How the Irish Heart Foundation can support your local F.A.S.T. campaigns

The Irish Heart Foundation wants to provide local groups with a menu of options to choose from when they are planning their local F.A.S.T. campaign. A local campaign could involve organising a local F.A.S.T. campaign launch, distributing publicity materials locally, leaflet drops, having information stands in public places, promoting F.A.S.T. in the local media and meeting with local groups to speak about F.A.S.T.

To support local campaigns the Irish Heart Foundation will:

- Supply all publicity materials.
- Give media and PR support and assist local groups to speak to their local newspapers and radio stations about F.A.S.T.
- Run F.A.S.T. ads on your local radio stations to bolster your local campaign.
- Promote local F.A.S.T. groups through a dedicated page on www.stroke.ie.
- Support local launches (provide materials, help to get a photographer and promote local launches on www.stroke.ie).
- Make contact with and gain the support of the national branches of organisations in your area – such as Citizens Information Centres, GPs and An Garda Síochána.
- Help get local politicians and Councils involved.
- Support local campaigners and be on hand to give support and advice at all times.

Two types of local F.A.S.T. campaigns – community-based and hospital-based

F.A.S.T. campaigns in the community

Groups such as stroke support groups, older people's groups and community groups can run community F.A.S.T. campaigns. These aim to spread the F.A.S.T. message in their organisation, village, town or local area.

Remember that you don't need to do everything suggested here – your group should do what they think would work in their area and what would suit the members of the group. And you might want to do things that we haven't included here but

which you come up with as you think about your campaign.

Here are just some of the things you could do as part of a F.A.S.T. campaign in your community:

- Launch the campaign: it could be launched by the stroke support group, a local celebrity or by the local consultant physician who works with stroke patients. Invite the local press to the launch, give them a press release and ask them to bring a photographer. We can provide your group with a draft press release.

The chemist chain, Boots, have agreed to support the F.A.S.T. campaign. If there is a Boots store in your community, they will be happy to host your launch.

Also, have someone on hand to take photos with a good digital camera (make sure it's on the highest setting so the photos will be good quality as they may be used by the media, on www.stroke.ie or in the IHF stroke magazine). Be sure to ask people in the photographs for permission to put their photo on the website, send it to the papers etc.

- Leaflet drop: Drop leaflets into local businesses and community buildings. Try and speak to the person who will be displaying the leaflets and briefly explain to them what the campaign is about. Ask organisations in your local community including health offices, libraries, public amenities like swimming pools and other sports facilities, citizen information centres, and community centres to hang up posters.
- Tie in with local groups: such as Macra na Feirme, the Rotary Club, the Credit Union and local charities that may be interested in stroke and see if they could help to spread the F.A.S.T. message among their members.
- Have an information stand in a local shopping centre for an afternoon: Your group could use the large A3 posters and balloons to attract attention and distribute the wallet cards to passersby. You could play the F.A.S.T. radio ad on a portable CD player and play the TV ad on a laptop to attract shoppers to your stand (if you want copies of the radio and TV ads please contact us).
- Tie in with local sporting events: to see if you can hand out leaflets at matches / race meetings / other sporting events and ask the announcer to read out a F.A.S.T. message on the loud speaker system.

- Send our F.A.S.T. email to co-workers and friends and/or arrange for a large employer in your area to send the email to their contacts. We can send you a copy of our designed F.A.S.T. email for this.
- Get the message on to your local radio station and put a local slant on the story, telling them about your local campaign and about stroke services in your area.

Case study – the Limerick stroke support group’s F.A.S.T. campaign

A year ago, the Limerick support stroke group decided to run their own F.A.S.T. campaign. Members of the support group and students all volunteered to get involved. They designed their own posters for hospitals and GP surgeries. They also produced t-shirts and bios with the F.A.S.T. message. One Sunday afternoon they all went to the local shopping centre with large posters and information leaflets. They got a good reaction from people in the shopping centre, especially from people with older family members. Their F.A.S.T. campaign was seen by hundreds of people in their local area.

Key areas and places to target with posters and leaflets

When you are handing out posters and leaflets there are a few key places you could think of:

- Health – GPs surgeries; pharmacies; hospitals; nursing homes; local health offices
- Community – schools; libraries; youth clubs; community centres; post offices; Citizen Information Centres; Garda stations; credit unions
- Public areas – shopping centres / businesses and shops in town centres
- Civic - local Councils and constituency offices of TDs and MEPs

- Companies, especially those with big workforces

F.A.S.T. campaigns in hospitals and other health care settings

In a hospital or a health service, a local F.A.S.T. campaign could include elements of a community campaign such as leaflet drops, local media work, etc. but could also include:

- Holding an information night for local healthcare workers to spread the F.A.S.T. message.
- Organising ongoing education sessions run for GPs led by a consultant physician with responsibility for stroke care.
- Holding short F.A.S.T. training and information seminars for staff.
- Consulting with management to see if F.A.S.T. training could be included in staff’s annual training, so it would be taught alongside CPR and manual handling training.
- Holding meetings with local paramedics and their trainers about F.A.S.T.
- Developing a stroke protocol with paramedics so that if a patient is F.A.S.T. positive, the Emergency Department is alerted prior to the patients’ arrival.

Case study – F.A.S.T. campaign in Naas General Hospital

The staff working in the stroke service in Naas hospital decided to run a F.A.S.T. campaign within the hospital. The aim of their campaign was to raise people’s awareness of stroke so that suspected stroke patients would be brought to the stroke service as quickly as possible to be treated. With funding from a pharmaceutical company they developed leaflets and posters which they distributed to local GP’s surgeries. They also organised an education for 400 healthcare professionals to show them how to identify if a patient was F.A.S.T. positive and a possible case for

the clot-busting drug thrombolysis. Members of the stroke service met with local ambulance crews, paramedics and their trainers. Now all local ambulances now have F.A.S.T. posters inside the ambulance to assist the crews in identifying possible stroke patients. The hospital's stroke physician is running ongoing education sessions for GPs and the stroke team want to get more involved in community education.

Support in dealing with the local media

As part of your campaign you could try to get your local media interested in your F.A.S.T. campaign.

The local media in your area (local radio, local papers) are interested in stories that have happened to people locally and issues that affect the area. Local journalists like press releases and interviews to have a local slant and because of this it will always work better if local groups contact the media themselves.

We can provide template press releases with information about F.A.S.T. and statistics which you can adapt to suit your particular campaign and then send to your local media. We can also provide you with the details of the local media in your County. And please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you want any advice or further information about running a launch event, or what to say in an interview. Contact us at (01) 6685001 or advocacy@irishheart.ie.

You could also contact your local radio station and see if they would be interested in doing an interview about stroke and the F.A.S.T. campaign. They might be interested in talking to a member of your campaign group, a person who has had a stroke and a nurse or doctor working in stroke care.

Preparing for media interviews

Keys to a good Interview

- Use as little jargon as possible. When possible, tell stories and anecdotes that illustrate your point and give examples.
- Keep the answers short.
- Think about what you want to say before you speak. Decide on two or three main points you would like to make about your subject. Use facts and figures to support your points where you can. Anticipate questions the reporter might ask and have responses ready.
- Speak in complete thoughts. The reporter's question may be edited out and your response should stand on its own. This is especially important for radio/TV interviews.
- Never say anything you do not want to read in print, hear on the radio, or see on television or on the internet.
- Be confident. You are the expert about your F.A.S.T. campaign.

Preparing before the Interview

- Decide on the most important thing you want to say and two or three smaller points you want to make.
- Anticipate the reporter's questions. What are your key messages? Answer difficult or irrelevant questions as briefly as possible, then speak to your key messages.
- If possible, provide the reporter/interviewer with a written summary of information, main points or statistics in advance (this could be your press release). This will help them ask more informed questions, which will enable you to get your message out more effectively.

During the Interview

- State the most important information first – then provide the background.
- Keep responses brief, but long enough to help the reporter get quotes.
- Stick to your main points and do not allow yourself to get drawn too far off on tangents. Many people make the

mistake of talking too much. Repeat your points if necessary to get back on track.

- Mention your subject [stroke, F.A.S.T. campaign] by name several times during the interview, rather than saying "it".
- Make eye contact with the reporter.
- Don't overestimate a reporter's knowledge of your subject. If a reporter bases questions on information you believe is incorrect, do not hesitate to set the record straight. Offer background information where necessary.
- Identify anything you say as either fact or opinion. Your opinions are your own, but fact is fact.
- If you do not understand a question, ask for clarification rather than talking around it. If you do not have the answer, say so. Tell the reporter where to find the information, if possible.
- Make your final comment clear and concise, reemphasizing your main point. If you feel that you failed to get the message out, force it in at the end.

Developing your own campaign tricks

We know that groups will come up with more ideas for their local campaign. We'd love to hear them so we share them with other groups through our website.

Email advocacy@irishheart.ie or call us at (01) 6685001 to tell us your ideas and plans.

Some campaign ideas to get you thinking

- **Campaign Idea 101: Run a micro Campaign**

By telling even one other person about F.A.S.T. you could help save a life. Run a micro campaign by asking everyone in your campaign group to each tell 5 people about F.A.S.T.

- **Campaign Idea 102: Watch the F.A.S.T. message spread across the country**

We want to watch the F.A.S.T. message spread across the country and would like photos of your campaign group. You could go to a well known location in your area / town (the Shandon Bells, Croke Park, the Burren, Newgrange, Strand Hill...) and take a photo of you or your campaign group

holding up the A3 F.A.S.T. poster. Then send us a copy to advocacy@irishheart.ie and we will upload them to www.stroke.ie so everyone can watch F.A.S.T. spread across the country.

Spreading ideas to all the F.A.S.T. campaigners across the country

To help improve and evaluate the F.A.S.T. campaign the Irish Heart Foundation appreciates any feedback that groups get from delivering the F.A.S.T. message in their local community. Please note anything of importance that may help with this and send us an email, or give us a call.

Thank you for your time and commitment to helping those affected by stroke. Your group's work will help save people from the effects of stroke.

The Irish Heart Foundation Advocacy Team

If you need any more information, need more publicity materials or want to tell us what you have been up to in your area contact the Advocacy team at advocacy@irishheart.ie or call (01) 6685001.

Visit www.stroke.ie to join our campaign for better stroke services in Ireland.

Campaign Checklist

Campaign activity	Tick ✓	Tick ✓	Notes
	Community Campaign	Healthcare setting	
Talked to people who might be interested in getting involved in a local F.A.S.T. campaign.			
Let us know in the Irish Heart Foundation about your group so we can provide support and publicise your campaign on www.stroke.ie .			
Organise a campaign launch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue • Spokespersons • Guests of honour - Stroke patients / stroke physician / local celebrity • Guests • Invite local media • Photographer & press release • Issue to the local papers 			
Contact the Irish Heart Foundation to organise local radio adverts to run during the local campaign.			
Make contact with local organisations which may be able to support the campaign and spread the message to members.			
Organise a leaflet drop to all relevant locations in your area. [See lists provided in the Campaign Kit].			
Have an information stand in the local shopping centre / hospital / other frequently used local building.			
Send the F.A.S.T. email to all the campaign group's contacts.			
Contact your local media (local papers and local media) and ask them to cover your F.A.S.T. campaign. You can contact us in the Irish Heart Foundation if you would like further advice and assistance.			
Hold an information night for local healthcare workers / local community to spread the F.A.S.T. message.	n/a		
Contact your local Council, local politicians, TDs and MEPs asking them to hang posters, put leaflets in their Council / constituency offices and to support the F.A.S.T. campaign.			
Organise ongoing education sessions for GPs.	n/a		
Hold short F.A.S.T. training and information seminars for healthcare staff.	n/a		
Find out if F.A.S.T. training could be included in staff's annual training.	n/a		
Hold meetings with local paramedics and their trainers about F.A.S.T.. Develop a stroke protocol with paramedics.	n/a		
Target patients in waiting rooms around the hospital-take even 10 minutes to hand out leaflets to people looking for something to read while they wait.	n/a		
Conduct a micro campaign where each campaigner tells 5 people they know about F.A.S.T..			

Campaign Checklist (continued)

Campaign activity	Tick ✓	Tick ✓	Notes
	Community Campaign	Healthcare setting	
Send the Irish Heart Foundation a photo showing the F.A.S.T. message spreading.			
Contact the Irish Heart Foundation to get template press release and advice about local media contacts. Adapt the press release to your local campaign.			
Just before you begin your campaign, send the release to your local media with a picture if possible.			
Keep in contact with the media and offer them spokespersons for interviews.			
Let the Irish Heart Foundation know of any interviews or events you are doing so that they can be publicised on Stroke.ie.			



FACE

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