

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and Scottish Opera Unlock the Therapeutic Benefits of Song in New Partnership

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- **Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is partnering with Scottish Opera to improve the lives of those living with aphasia through singing and song-writing**

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and Scottish Opera have launched a partnership to develop singing classes for people living with aphasia with the aim of improving mental wellbeing and confidence in communication.

In Scotland, 15000 people a year will experience stroke. Aphasia is a communication condition that is a common effect of stroke, caused by damage to the part of the brain that controls language. Aphasia can range in severity and may influence speech, reading, writing, and/or language comprehension. In some cases, some people may be unable to speak at all.

Following research and development sessions with medical educators, Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland staff and people living with aphasia will work with Scottish Opera to provide supported communication and aphasia training. The team from the Company will then develop the therapeutic singing and song-writing offering for those living with aphasia.

Range of benefits

Singing groups have shown to positively influence people's health and wellbeing, including those living with conditions such as COPD, Long Covid and aphasia. With this in mind, Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland will also promote *Breath Cycle*, an original Scottish Opera programme, offering therapeutic singing and breath control training for those with respiratory issues including COPD and Long Covid to its service users across the country. Since Autumn 2021, over 400 people from Scotland and across the world have been helping themselves to regain both their physical and mental health through a series of online training and mentoring *Breath Cycle* sessions with a group of Scottish Opera artists.

CEO of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, Jane-Claire Judson, commented: "Working with Scottish Opera to unlock the therapeutic benefits of singing and song-writing to people living with aphasia is a fantastic opportunity to tackle real issues facing people across the country.

"We regularly hear from the people we support that living with a communication difficulty following stroke can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness and have a negative impact on mental health.

"We look forward to bringing people together to experience the joy of singing with others whilst exploring the benefits of singing and songwriting to their communication skills."

Jane Davidson, Director of Outreach and Education at Scottish Opera said: "Following on from the increased awareness of our *Breath Cycle II* programme in 2020, which was designed for people living with Long COVID and other respiratory conditions, Scottish

Opera is excited to partner with CHSS on the development of a new strand of creative music making to support people with Aphasia.

“The work that CHSS undertakes each year with hundreds of thousands of Scots has set really high standards in the positive integration of mental health and well-being initiatives with clinical intervention. As Scotland’s largest performing arts company, we feel that the values of both our organisations are beautifully aligned in this new collaboration that seeks to enhance the quality of people’s lives across the country.”