

## WHAT IS PARKINSON'S?

Parkinson's Disease (PD) is an incurable neurodegenerative disease, afflicting one person in every 500. It ripples through families, communities and health services, impacting on many more. It affects more men than women.

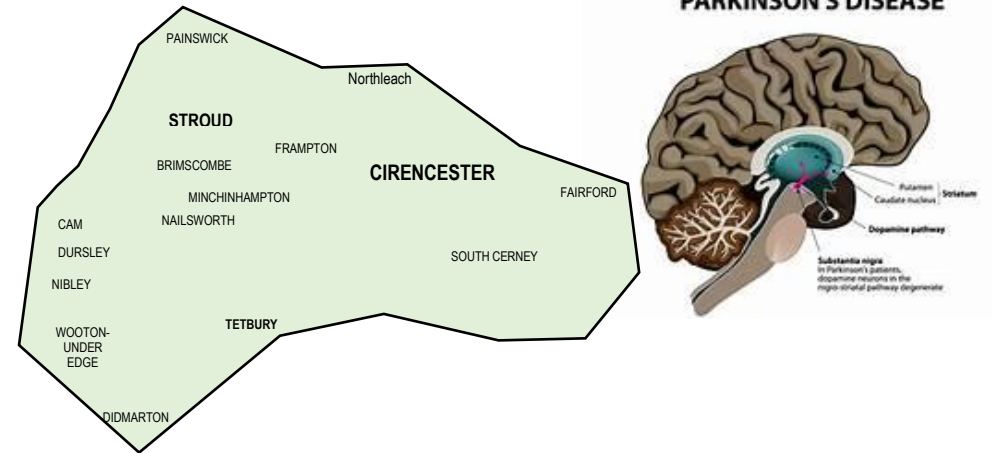
Often considered as a condition of the elderly, the average age for diagnosis is 60. However, when diagnosed in people aged 40 or younger it is referred to as Early Onset Parkinson's Disease (EOPD).

The condition is complex, as are the responses to its medication and other treatments – affecting very few people in the same way. The brain ordinarily produces a chemical called dopamine which is vital to many significant functions especially movement. Its production is compromised in people with Parkinson's. Over time, this leads to changes across multiple functions and abilities.

The so-called Parkinson's stoop, gait and tremor are generally well-known symptoms. Less well known are the effects that the condition can have on other aspects of movement and also dexterity, speech, mood, and behaviour. Parkinson's UK have calculated that the disease can cause more than 50 significant disorders.

In some people the effects of the disease can be controlled for some time using medication and other interventions. Exercise is a vital part of managing the condition.

Parkinson's places burdens on those with the condition, their families, carers and communities. But the condition need not diminish us. It can and should make us stronger.



## CIRENCESTER & STROUD BRANCH of PUK

Our Branch covers a large rural area centred around Cirencester, Stroud and Tetbury (see the map above).

Our principal aims are to provide our members with regular activities: such as social gatherings, speaker events, trips and outings and exercise (in as many forms as possible). We provide them with focussed support and information relevant to their condition. Our secondary aims include helping carers and families.

As well as face-to-face meetings, we have recently unveiled our own carefully designed website which is intended to be an important channel for us to communicate with our members, their carers, families and the broader community. The website carries news of our activities and information of interest.

The path to living better with Parkinson's, its treatment and ultimate cure is paved by research. We encourage our members to join in those research projects where they feel they can. We aim to provide them with a choice of possible projects that meet their particular stage in the condition.

We are self-funded through donations and fundraising. Annually we make a substantial contribution to one or more research projects focused on finding a cure, identified by PUK. Subject to resources we also contribute to the costs of activities, therapies, transport, and respite care for our local members.

Over time we are aiming to develop best (or better) practice for our Branch to support the local population affected by Parkinson's. This includes interacting with relevant NHS structures and social services, purposeful engagement with research initiatives, cooperation and collaboration with other PUK branches and greater use of the national PUK's resources. Most importantly, we hope to reach as many people with PD as possible in our area, so that we can offer them, their carers and families regular activities, social gatherings, speaker events as well as trips, outings, exercise & other physical activities all to help people living with Parkinson's in our area. We also want to continually improve how we inform and engage with the broader community.

We have a dynamic Committee that is supported by specially formed Focus Groups which help with specific projects.

There is no need to live alone with Parkinson's. Talk to and learn from others. Everyone has their own Parkinson's story. Yours might be the one that makes a difference. We aim to provide respite, an ear to listen, a chance to laugh and the opportunity to live better with Parkinson's. Please consider joining our branch (for free) and / or volunteering to assist us.

To join our branch or volunteer please contact Karen Young (Branch Secretary) by phone or email

Our branch phone: 07586 532 635

Our branch email: [cirenstroudpuk@yahoo.com](mailto:cirenstroudpuk@yahoo.com)

Our branch website: [www.cirenstroudpuk.co.uk](http://www.cirenstroudpuk.co.uk)

*This handout is accurate as of January 2024*

## PARKINSON'S UK

Parkinson's UK is the UK's biggest Parkinson's support and research charity. It is at the forefront of international research into the condition's treatment and cure.

The charity campaigns actively on behalf of those with PD and their carers. It provides information and support through a UK wide team of Parkinson's Advisors, a website, free confidential helpline, publications, and other resources.

Parkinson's UK aims to bring people with Parkinson's together with their carers and families, through a network of local branches. The Cirencester and Stroud Branch of Parkinson's UK is one such branch.

Parkinson's UK hopes that its presence means that no one has to face Parkinson's alone.

Visit the website: [www.parkinsons.org.uk](http://www.parkinsons.org.uk)

Email: [hello@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:hello@parkinsons.org.uk)

Call the free confidential helpline on 0808 800 0303

Please consider joining our branch of Parkinson's UK (for a small fee)

*Parkinson's UK is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom. A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales (00948776). Registered office: 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, SW1V 1EJ. A charity registered in England and Wales*