

Stroke-news

April 2010

Letter from the stroke clinical director, Dr Tony Rudd

I am pleased to report on the initial success of the new stroke system across London. Nearly all of the hyper-acute stroke units (HASUs) are now live, providing immediate care for all stroke patients presenting within three hours of onset of symptoms. Early review of the process suggests that the systems seem to be working well. Patients are entering the HASUs as intended and their transfer to dedicated stroke units is occurring smoothly.

These are great achievements and I am impressed and encouraged by the rapid progress thus far. I recognise that there is a significant burden in collecting the many different data points needed. We will be working together on ways to reduce the complexity of this process in the near future. In the meantime, I encourage you to complete the National Sentinel Audit forms by the end of this month.



Please be on the lookout for important documents that will soon be published. Within the next month, you will see a document on workforce training issues published by CSL. Additionally, the NICE quality standards will be issued in May or June.

I hope that you have reviewed the slides from the Stroke Improvement Programme (SIP), *Accelerating Stroke Improvement*. This project aligns the efforts across the Department of Health, SIP and the pan-London stroke networks through shared objectives and milestones for 2010/11. These are ambitious targets and illustrate stroke service improvement as a top national priority.

Our main focus for the upcoming year will be the expansion of stroke improvements outside the acute setting. We must now look toward further developing care in the community, such as rehabilitation services.

I am confident that our many accomplishments to date will speak for themselves. I believe the programme will continue on the path we've started, regardless of the outcome of the upcoming election on the 6th of May. As always, we will work closely with those in office to ensure continued improvements in stroke care for all Londoners.

Here's to a stimulating springtime.

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More information

Healthcare for London, part of Commissioning Support for London, is an NHS programme to improve the capital's health services. To find out more, visit HealthcareForLondon.nhs.uk.

We encourage you to forward this newsletter to others who may find it useful.

Accelerating Stroke Improvement

Professor Roger Boyle, Department of Health national director for heart disease and stroke, in February presented an [outline framework for accelerating further work in stroke](#).

Accelerating Stroke Improvement provides intensive whole-system support to services to accelerate implementation of the [National Stroke Strategy](#) during 2010/11, with the aim of achieving key milestones in care across the stroke pathway covering prevention, acute services, and long-term care:

- Atrial fibrillation detection and treatment
- Timely and effective management of TIA
- Direct admission to a stroke unit
- Timely brain scan
- Early supported discharge (ESD)
- Joint care plans using single assessment process
- Review at 6/52, 6/12 and yearly
- Carer's assessment
- Psychological support



The methods will combine the efforts and activities of Stroke Networks, the [NHS Stroke Improvement Programme](#) and the [Department of Health](#) to mobilise local improvement initiatives, supported by SHA, PCT and Trust senior management.

Data will be reported on a regular basis, and will be monitored at national, regional and network level. Networks will work with local teams to support service improvement and data management in order to deliver the key measures and aims by April 2011.

North East Network

Stroke rehabilitation services: Support for life after stroke

Nurses and therapists across North East London have made significant strides over the past six months to work towards effective, specialist and accessible stroke rehabilitation services.

The aim for the sector is to work together to achieve a good quality of life for individuals and their carers and relatives through innovation and quality services, based in the most appropriate settings.

Achievements to date have included consistent referral forms across inner and outer North East London to enable easy transfer of information between services, and also establishment of a consistent way of setting goals for rehabilitation using the *Goal Attainment Scale*.

Through collaborative working, the North East London Network has also completed a successful pilot of vocational rehabilitation outreach across the sector. This pilot has enabled people to receive specific rehabilitation targeted at returning to work. This includes individual support to overcome the barriers an individual faces when accessing, remaining or returning to work following a stroke.

Accredited HASU, stroke units and TIA services across North East London

The improved acute pathways for transient ischemic attack (TIA) and stroke patients are continuing to be rolled out across London. In North East London, the development and improvement of services has been highly successful. All TIA services, hyper-acute stroke units (HASU) and stroke unit (SU) services have been formally accredited in the sector with the capacity to provide high quality services to for people with TIA 'mini stroke' or stroke.

The HASU units located at Queens Hospital Romford and Royal London Hospital have commenced providing specialist care for stroke patients including the specialised 'clot-busting' drug thrombolysis to patients who may be suitable. HASUs provide high level specialist care for stroke for usually the first 72 hours following a stroke.

Accredited TIA services and stroke units are located at Homerton University Hospital, Whipps Cross University Hospital, Royal London Hospital, Newham University Hospital and Queens Hospital Romford. These services have been assessed against agreed criteria and signed off as able to offer effective and specialist TIA intervention and stroke care close to home.

Primary care training for nurses: Early identification and management of CVD

Throughout summer 2010, the North East London Cardiac and Stroke Network will be providing specialist training for primary care nurses. In collaboration with Education with Health, over 40 local nurses will be provided with education on the identification and management of atrial fibrillation: prevention, understanding and reduction of cardiovascular disease risk factors such as smoking and weight management and successful management of hypertension in primary care settings.

The training will provide nurses with the required skills and knowledge to actively identify patients at high risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and offer guidance about the available interventions and lifestyle changes. Early recognition and intervention of high risk patients is anticipated to prevent over 15,000 cardiovascular events, such as stroke, per year in England and Wales.

North West Network

Accreditation update

The North West London Network has been working closely with the five stroke units (SU) and two hyper-acute stroke units (HASU) to achieve the Healthcare for London performance criteria for A1 and A2 accreditation.

There are now 125 SU beds and 18 HASU beds that have been opened and accredited to the A1 standards, and the second phase of accreditation (A2) should be completed by the end of April.

This accreditation process should provide assurance that the new HASUs and SUs are meeting the quality standards as set out in the new Healthcare for London stroke model.

The transfer of patients between the HASUs and SUs across the region is working well, in line with the newly established transfer protocols for stroke patients.

Atrial fibrillation events

The North West and North Central London networks ran a successful event in February on the challenges for clinicians of identifying, managing and treating patients with atrial fibrillation (AF).

The event underlined how better identification, management and treatment of AF patients could significantly reduce their risk of stroke. The network is now in process of setting up an AF workstream that will focus upon the impact that AF has upon stroke services across North West London.

This workstream will be launched through a June process mapping and pathway evaluation event to which consultants, GPs, cardiac specialist nurses and allied health professionals will be invited.



North Central Network

Caroline Kilby joins NCL team

The Network is delighted to welcome Caroline Kilby as the new Service Improvement Manager for stroke. Most of you will know Caroline in her previous role working on the acute stroke project for Commissioning Support for London. She brings with her a wealth of experience and knowledge about the project, which will be of great value to the Network.



Raising public awareness

One of the key pieces of work in the last two months was the commissioning of an awareness raising film for the new stroke pathway and a series of events in local shopping centres. These events involved local PCTs and stroke user groups, who used the opportunity to engage with members of the public on stroke awareness.



Developing a 2010/11 commissioning plan

The Stroke Commissioning Group met recently to develop a commissioning plan for 2010/11, particularly around the five recommendations in the London Stroke Rehabilitation Guidance. There is considerable impetus to ensure that early supported discharge is available for all appropriate stroke survivors across the sector and that there is sufficient stroke-skilled rehabilitation capacity in each PCT area, utilising resources such as the Clinicenta contracts where appropriate. Constructive discussions have been facilitated by the Network between commissioners and providers in areas where there is currently insufficient rehabilitation bed capacity.



Progress in acute stroke pathway

From an urgent care perspective, the key development has been to set up a Stroke Co-ordinators Group, which is a sub-group of the Urgent Care Task Group. This group is there to ensure that the North Central London units are communicating effectively and regularly in how the new pathways are operating and alerting the Network to any issues in the system. The units are co-operating extremely well amongst themselves and also with PCT rehabilitation providers. The Network is currently preparing for A2 assessments and A1 reviews and working with the Acute Commissioning Agency to undertake regular monitoring and feedback to the units.

The launch of the awareness raising event in Wood Green Shopping Centre in Haringey, attended by local councillors and some familiar faces

South Network

New website launched

The team at the South London Cardiac and Stroke Network (SLCSN) are pleased to launch their new website, www.slcsn.nhs.uk. The new site reflects the comprehensive work of the South East London and South West London networks and includes information for both clinicians and patients.

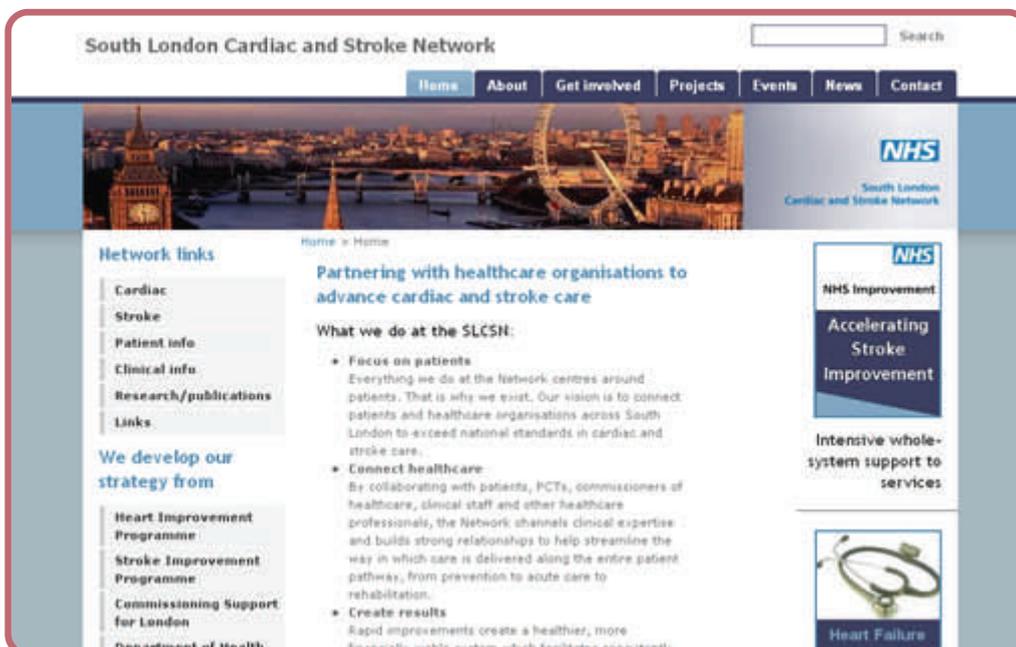
On the site you can find published documents and guidelines produced by the Network, upcoming events, health news, links to cardiac and stroke organisations and details about work stream projects and meetings.

HASU assessment update

As of 1 April all HASUs in South London passed their assessments in accordance with the Healthcare for London A1 HASU standards.

The assessments for King's College Hospital (Denmark Hill) and St George's Hospital (Tooting) were led by Dr Tony Rudd; the St Thomas' Hospital assessment was led by Patrick Gompertz.

Trusts across London are now gearing up for the full go-live date on 19th July and we are doing all we can to ensure our partner organisations are prepared to meet the challenge.

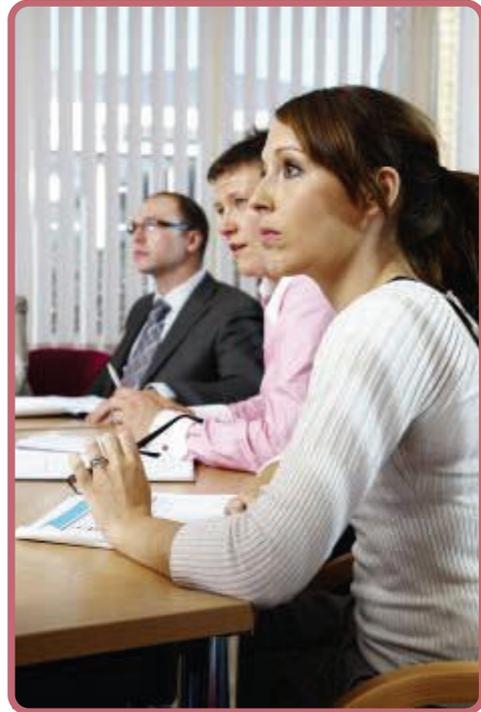


South Network

Rousing success: GP education events in South East London

The South East London team held an extremely successful atrial fibrillation education event for GPs at Guy's Hospital in January. More than 60 GPs were in attendance to learn about AF topics through in-depth presentations such as *Warfarin and new drug treatments*, *Risk stratification and stroke* and *Secondary care interventions and when to refer*, among others. A panel discussion integrated a quiz to test the audience's interpretation of ECGs.

Knowledge-sharing and physician engagement that encourages such transformation is vital for delivering service improvement. We will be holding two stroke prevention education events for GPs in South East London. One event will be held on 25 May at Lewisham and the other on 24 June in Bexley. We are optimistic that these events will prove equally as valuable to our participants. For further details, please e-mail info@slcsn.nhs.uk.



SLCSN stroke rehab guidelines released

The South East London stroke team has released [best practice guidelines for inpatient and community stroke rehabilitation services](#). This document, already employed by NHS Lewisham and Bexley Care Trust, has been shared with the pan-London networks and other relevant stakeholders.

The 'simple, brief and practical' document was developed by frontline clinicians participating in the South East stroke rehabilitation workstream. These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the Healthcare for London [rehabilitation commissioning guide](#) and competency document.

The [Stroke Improvement Programme](#) highlighted the best practice guidelines in its 30 March national newsletter, imparting this valuable work to the networks across the country.

Upcoming events

NIHR SRN 4th annual conference

Join the National Institute for Health Research Stroke Research Network for their 4th annual conference, *Innovation in stroke research: challenges and opportunities* on 16-17 June at Newcastle upon Tyne.

The [conference programme](#) and [registration form](#) are available for download from the [SRN website](#).

Different Strokes annual conference

Different Strokes' annual conference, 8 May in Cambridge, will focus on *Work after stroke*. Presentations will include 'Managing medication whilst working' and 'Psychological issues: Anxiety and returning to work,' amongst others.

The conference registration form and further details are available through the [Different Strokes website](#).

European Stroke conference 2010

The 19th European Stroke Conference (ESC) will take place in Barcelona from 25–28 May. This year's main topic is *Strike out stroke: Action for stroke prevention in atrial fibrillation*.

Visit the ESC website to view the [preliminary programme overview](#) and [registration information](#).

Online resources

New online resource for patient and public engagement

Picker Institute Europe has launched a new online resource for NHS commissioners and providers with an interest in patient and public engagement.

The DH funded [Invest in Engagement](#) provides an evidence review of more than 280 research sources, case studies, links to policy information and guidance.

Ordinary people tell the story of the NHS

A new study has been published looking at the experiences of ordinary people and their opinions of their care over the first 60 years of the NHS.

[Ordinary people tell the story](#) highlights how expectations have changed over the decades, people's experiences of the NHS, and also the strong commitment to its founding concepts.

Read the Wellcome Trust's [press release](#) and download the 79-page study, [Ordinary people tell the story](#).