

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Published report highlights need for better support, coordination for stroke survivors

A new report released today from The Stroke Association calls for improved support and increased coordination of health and social care services for UK stroke survivors and their families in order that they have better long term outcomes following a stroke.

The report, *Struggling to Recover*, surveyed the views of 2,200 people affected by stroke. It found that whilst acute services in London have improved dramatically over the past few years, there still exist great challenges in community support and coordination with social services. This confirms that stroke survivors and their families are not receiving the support they require after they leave hospital, which can affect the quality of life following a stroke.

Recommendations in the report include a stronger emphasis and appropriate funding must be given to the clinical stroke networks to achieve coordination along the entire patient pathway, with a specific focus on working with adult social care. National organisations such as the NHS National Commissioning Board and NICE are challenged to prioritise stroke and ensure that all services meet clinically and financially appropriate high standards.

The South London Cardiac and Stroke Network links patients and healthcare professionals across the region to advance the quality and accessibility of stroke care. Its work includes the development of guidance and tools for commissioners and clinicians. In addition, the Network produces information for patients and their families, explaining the patient's condition, management plan and contact information where they can obtain the support they may need.

Since 2009, the clinical stroke networks across London have worked to implement a new model of acute care which provides access to expert stroke care on a 24/7 basis. All patients with a suspected stroke are taken within 30 minutes to one of eight hyper acute stroke units (HASU) in the capital to receive top quality care from specialist staff. Multiple analyses have proven the clinical and economic benefits of the London model, including a reduction in length of stay and an increase in thrombolysis (clot busting drugs). This revolutionary acute pathway offers such high quality care immediately following a stroke that approximately 35 per cent of patients are discharged home within a few days following their stay at a HASU.

As Londoners are now receiving the best acute stroke care in the country, the London Stroke Networks have turned their attention to improving prevention of and life after stroke. The networks welcome the report by The Stroke Association which supports the need for an ongoing national focus on stroke and patient outcomes.

"This report reinforces critical areas of improvement from the patient perspective, and aligns with a high proportion of our current work," said Lucy Grothier, Director of the South London Cardiac and Stroke Network. "We are aware of the challenges that exist following a stroke and have been working with our partner organisations to make quality improvements that address them. The feedback from patients from this report will be used to inform our future work and priorities."

How the South London Cardiac and Stroke Network is addressing long term stroke care

- This year, the Network has worked across South London to ensure that all boroughs are providing stroke-skilled community rehabilitation, an evidence based specialist response in a patient's own home.
- Half of the boroughs in the region currently have access to an early supported discharge (ESD) team. This means that where appropriate, patients are returning to their own homes faster. Being in a familiar environment rather than in hospital has been proven to provide better outcomes. The Network is working to get all boroughs up to this standard.
- Network clinical teams are looking at how to improve access to psychological support and six month reviews for patients following a stroke. Local pilots are already underway.

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CONTACT

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Notes to editors

- The full report, [Struggling to Recover](#), is available through The Stroke Association's website.

About the South London Cardiac and Stroke Network

The South London Cardiac and Stroke Network brings together patients, clinicians and commissioners for improved patient outcomes along the entire pathway. To learn more about how the Network is transforming care in the region, please visit www.slcsn.nhs.uk.