

Cross-Party Group on Stroke

Friday 6 December 2024, 12pm – 1pm

Agenda

Agenda item 1: Welcome & Apologies

Apologies noted from: Alexander Stewart MSP, Roz McCall MSP, Prof Lisa Kidd, Dr Amy Mulroue, Dr Jackie Hamilton, Alan Flynn, Colin Oliver

Agenda item 2: Review of previous meetings & actions

Previous meeting: **Friday 20 September 2024**

Topic: The Stroke Improvement Plan – One Year On

ACTION 1: Convener to write to Chair of the National Thrombectomy Planning Board re. funding gap in the East of Scotland. Completed.

Acknowledgement received from the Chair advising the Minister for Public Health & Women's Health "will respond in due course".

ACTION 2: Deputy Convener to raise a Parliamentary Question on recurrent funding and barriers to progress for thrombectomy. Completed.

"To ask the Scottish Government what barriers to progress of the work of the national thrombectomy programme have been identified, and what action is being taken to overcome these."

- **Asked by:** Roz McCall, MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party
 - **Date lodged:** 26 September 2024
 - **Current status:** Answered by Jenni Minto on 8 October 2024
- Response: Question Reference: [S6W-30183](#)

ACTION 3: Convener to write to the Minister for Public Health & Women's Health asking her to deliver a message of encouragement and expectation from the CPG to the 14 Health Board stroke senior leaders during their meeting of 10 October 2024. Completed.

Request also made for a written update of the meeting, civil servants have agreed to provide one.

The message:

“The Cross-Party Group on stroke at the Scottish Parliament wants to offer its encouragement and expectations to all of you for today’s meeting. We see this roundtable as an important step.

Delivery of the Stroke Improvement Plan needs your leadership and direct involvement. Stroke’s connectivity to other departments means that stroke pathway improvements will likely involve changes to other departments and ways of working. These can only happen with senior managerial leadership. But changes *will* reap rewards.

Deliver stroke improvements and by doing so, you will also improve other areas such as A&E waiting times. This is about leadership. We hope the meeting goes well.”

ACTION 4: Convener to submit Parliamentary Question asking about the named stroke individuals per health board and how their delivery of stroke improvements will be measured. Not completed.

Deputy Convener asked a similar portfolio question in Chamber on 27 November 2024:

“To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the progress towards implementing the key priority areas highlighted in its Stroke Improvement Plan 2023.”

- **Asked by:** Roz McCall, MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party
- **Date lodged:** 20 November 2024
- **Current status:** Taken in the Chamber on 27 November 2024

Response: Question Reference: [S6O-04015](#)

ACTION 5: Convener to write to Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government regarding challenges posed to thrombectomy development by lack of recurrent funding. Completed. Minister for Public Health & Women’s Health, and the Cabinet Secretary for Health, were cc’ed in. Awaiting reply.

Agenda item 3: Discussion Topic: rehabilitation in stroke

Speakers:

Sophie Bridger, Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS)
Graham McGowan, Deeside Stroke Group
Neil Muir, Public Health Scotland

Ms Bridger delivered a Powerpoint presentation on the Right to Rehab campaign, a coalition of charities urging for greater focus and investment in rehabilitation for patients.

Key points:

- The Scottish Government published its “Framework for Supporting People through Recovery and Rehabilitation during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic” in 2020. The aim of this work is to ensure that *“By the end of 2025 all adults who require rehabilitation will have timely access to the right information and services in the right place to support them to participate as actively as possible and enjoy the life they choose.”*
- CHSS’s “1 in 5” report found that only half of people who need rehabilitation access it. 1 in 5 stroke survivors were not referred for rehabilitation at all. Half of people with aphasia were unable to access rehabilitation support they need (particularly for speech & language therapy).
- The campaign urged for rehabilitation access to be incorporated into a forthcoming Human Rights Bill. The Bill was not included in the 2024-25 Programme for Government. This is viewed as a missed opportunity, with barriers remaining for people to access rehabilitation services.

Ms Bridger finished her presentation by showing a video of people who have experienced rehabilitation. Provided details for people to join the campaign’s petition, share it and how to join.

Graham McGowan, a stroke survivor and member of the Deeside Stroke Group, gave a powerful Powerpoint presentation about his stroke rehabilitation journey. Mr McGowan had his stroke out-with opening hours for a thrombectomy at Ninewells Hospital. Mr McGowan began physiotherapy four days after his stroke, and through rehabilitation at Woodend Hospital and Horizons Outpatient Centre, he has made significant progress in his recovery. Recovery remains an ongoing process and requires care and support from his wife.

Neil Muir delivered a Powerpoint presentation about the Scottish Stroke Care Audit, rehabilitation data and an overview of the Stroke Rehabilitation Audit Bundle. Key points:

- This is an organisational audit to overview rehabilitation services.
- The Red-Amber-Green (RAG) criteria for rehabilitation in the audit is in line with the 2023 Stroke Improvement Plan.
- The aim of the audit is to develop a Stroke Rehabilitation Bundle, focusing on the key stages of rehabilitation. Views from people with lived experience are being sought from the National Stroke Voices group.
- Trials are currently underway in the NHS Grampian and NHS Lanarkshire Health Boards. Data will be reviewed and a decision then made on a potential roll-out.
- Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs) will be developed in future work.
- Audit questions will be expanded to include all professional inputs.

Agenda item 4: Q&A and discussion

Members asked questions to the speakers and had a wider discussion about the status of stroke rehabilitation in Scotland.

Comments were also made about the Budget announcement earlier in the week where funding for stroke thrombectomy services has increased from £15.7 million to £16 million for 2025/26 (subject to passing through Parliament). Concerns that this is an inadequate increase and is actually a real-terms cut.

Convener proposed the following actions which were agreed by the group:

ACTION 1: Convener to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government pressing for greater investment into stroke thrombectomy services.

ACTION 2: Convener to write to the 14 Health Board senior stroke leaders to ask what their plans are for funding stroke rehabilitation services for their areas – HOLD on this action until Budget becomes clearer.

ACTION 3: Convener to write to the 14 Health Board senior stroke leaders asking what steps they are taking to improve the RAG chart rehabilitation rankings, as set out in the 2024 Scottish Stroke Care Audit report and highlighted in the Stroke Association's "Thriving after stroke" report.

Agenda item 5: AOB

The next meeting of the group will take place on **Friday 31 January 2025, on Teams**, where we will hold our AGM. Dates for the 2025 meetings to be confirmed.

ENDS