

# IMPROVING STROKE CARE IN GREATER MANCHESTER



Greater Manchester Integrated  
Stroke Delivery Network

## UPDATE FOR 2019-20

### STROKE TREATMENT AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Stroke is the fourth biggest killer and the leading cause of disability in the UK.

Around 6,000 people a year have a stroke in our region and care is provided initially at the region's stroke units, with specialist community teams supporting stroke survivors when they go home.

During the pandemic, stroke services have been maintained although sometimes patients have had to go home earlier than usual. Stroke teams are also now providing care using more virtual methods, such as by phone or video conference.

Life after stroke support provided by the voluntary sector has been stepped up and also adapted to be more virtual.



### GETTING PEOPLE TO HOSPITAL QUICKLY

Time is brain in stroke. Every second of delay getting to hospital can cause more damage to the brain and risk death or disability.

Knowing the symptoms of stroke is critical and you need to Act FAST – Face Arms Speech and Time (to dial 999).

We have worked with our ambulance services to improve recognition of stroke and ensure their staff take patients to the right hospital first time so they can receive life-saving treatments.

Our smartphone app helps ambulance crews make a quick decision on the best hospital for a patient with stroke symptoms.



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## IMPROVING HOSPITAL STROKE CARE

The region's hospital stroke services continue to be rated as 'A' for every resident.

Salford Royal offers a surgical procedure to remove blood clots in the brain called thrombectomy, with 80 Greater Manchester patients a year benefitting from this treatment. It is now available 7 days a week during office hours, with plans underway to extend to 24/7 in 2021.

Preventing our stroke patients from having another stroke is a priority and we are looking at ways to improve our detection of Atrial Fibrillation (heart flutter) - a common cause of stroke that is treatable with drugs.



## CARE AT HOME

The specialist support stroke survivors and their families receive at home is vital.

In the last few years, we have worked hard to ensure that all boroughs in Greater Manchester offer high quality community stroke rehabilitation for everyone who needs it.

Bolton, Eastern Cheshire, Heywood Middleton & Rochdale, Salford, Stockport and Wigan have all invested more money to enhance services.

We are now working to close some gaps including better access to emotional wellbeing support (such as psychology) and early diagnosis and treatment of visual impairment.

During the pandemic, we made changes to help ensure that all patients discharged from hospital were referred to the voluntary sector for extra support.

A new online service called Speakeasy At Home has been established to help support those affected by aphasia remotely whilst face to face contact remains difficult.



## HEARING THE PATIENT AND CARER VOICE

Our Patient and Carer Group remain very active and have moved online during the pandemic.

They continue to advise and support stroke services including accompanying the network team on its stroke unit visits during 2019/20.

