

Number of stroke survivors in Wales continues to increase

The report shows that the number of people in Wales who died after suffering a stroke has decreased by 6% since 2011.

It also identifies improvements in the performance of Welsh hospitals when treating stroke patients.

More hospitals are now reaching the higher levels "B" to "D" against the Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme (SSNAP) than in 2013-14, where the majority of Welsh sites were achieving the lowest grade "E".

Improvements in performance can be linked to a number of achievements in patient care, including effective pre-assessment of stroke patients.

Stroke patients are now receiving quicker access to brain scans upon admission to hospital. The percentage of patients receiving a CT scan within 1 hour in Wales increased from 41.6% in 2015-16 to 50.6%, in line with guidelines set by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP). Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that patients are scanned within 12 hours, with 91% of Welsh sites performed better than the audit average of 94%. Over 95% of Welsh patients were scanned within 12 hours.

During 2016-17, 50.8% of Welsh patients were directly admitted to a stroke unit within the 4 hour guidelines set by the RCP. Compliance against this measure has continuously improved, increasing by 12.3% since 2015-16, reducing the likelihood of other associated complications.

The SSNAP report indicated that 83.4% of applicable patients received a joint health and social care plan when they are discharged from a Welsh stroke unit. This is as a result of a cooperative approach between doctors, nurses and therapists working alongside the patient and their family, to achieve the best levels of recovery.

The Welsh Government and Stroke Implementation Group have also invested in clinical research through funding of a Stroke Research Hub. This collaboration with Cardiff Metropolitan University provides an opportunity to stimulate new research which will benefit both stroke sufferers and those most at risk of stroke.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

"Time is critical to treating anyone suffering from a stroke, so the faster an individual gets expert help, the better their chances are of making a full recovery.

"It's great to see that more people in Wales are accessing high quality, urgent care during their treatment, and afterwards through

rehabilitation, psychological and at times social care provision. I credit all the healthcare professionals for their dedication to improving services for patients in Wales.

“We strive for everyone to have the lowest possible risk of having a stroke, and, when it does occur, to have an excellent chance of surviving, and returning to independence as quickly as possible.

“To build on this momentum, NHS organisations, social services and the third sector must continue to cooperate for all patients across all services in Wales.”