

# 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.”

---

## **Poultry keepers reminded of the importance of biosecurity and to be vigilant for signs of Avian Flu**

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has today announced the detection of the European strain of the H5N6 highly pathogenic Avian Influenza virus in 17 wild birds in Dorset. A local “avian Influenza protection zone” will be introduced in the affected area of Dorset which will require captive bird keepers to put in place enhanced biosecurity measures.

The risk to public health is regarded as low to very low. The Food Standards Agency has also offered reassurance that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

Wales is currently free from Avian Flu, but there is a constant risk the disease may arrive during the bird migration season.

The Chief Veterinary Officer is advising all poultry keepers in Wales, from small backyard flocks to large commercial premises, to review their biosecurity, sign up for disease alerts and register their birds with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) by contacting their GB Poultry Register Helpline on 0800 634 1112. Keepers are also reminded they must report any unexplained deaths or sickness in their birds to their vet.

The Chief Veterinary Officer said:

“Although Wales is currently free from Avian Flu, the wild bird migration season is well under way and there is a constant risk of the disease, particularly at this time.

“Finding Avian Influenza (AI) in wild birds in the UK is not unexpected at this time of year and surveillance in other Member

States has identified AI throughout Europe in recent weeks.

“Detection of the disease in wild birds in Dorset emphasises the need for poultry keepers to remain vigilant and monitor their birds for any signs of disease.

“I cannot stress enough the importance of practicing the very highest levels of biosecurity and I urge all poultry keepers to review their biosecurity plans. They must be prepared and take actions for example feeding and watering birds under cover to help reduce the chance of their birds becoming infected.

“Keepers of poultry and other captive birds should ensure every effort is made to prevent contact with wild birds. The movement of poultry should be minimised, and clothing and equipment should always be cleansed and disinfected before and after their use.”

If poultry keepers are concerned about the health of their birds they should seek advice from their veterinary surgeon. If they suspect their birds have AI, they should report it to their local [Animal and Plant Health Agency](#) (external link) immediately.

If members of the public find dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or gulls, or five or more dead wild birds of other species in the same location, they should report them to the Defra helpline on: 03459 33 55 77 or email: [defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk). This service covers the whole of GB.

All keepers are encouraged to register their poultry. It is a legal requirement to register if keepers have premises with 50 or more birds. Keepers of premises with fewer than 50 birds are encouraged to [register voluntarily](#) (external link).

Keepers are advised to sign up for [disease alerts](#) (external link).

More information on Avian Influenza, the current situation in Wales and across the UK and advice for backyard keepers, including on biosecurity is available on the [Welsh Government's website](#).

---

## [Share your story on locally owned renewable energy](#)

In September 2017, the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths announced ambitious new targets for energy generation in Wales including:

- 1 gigawatt (GW) of renewable electricity capacity in Wales to be locally

owned by 2030; and

- Renewable energy projects to have at least an element of local ownership by 2020.

The [call for evidence](#), which will last 12 weeks, aims to gather evidence about how increasing local ownership of renewable energy generation can secure benefits for Wales and spread this in a more equitable way.

It will help identify the challenges developers, businesses, local authorities, communities and others will need to overcome to deliver more renewable generation in local and shared ownership.

Cabinet Secretary said:

“We are focusing on accelerating the transition of our energy system in Wales, particularly through the increased use of renewable energy. Last September, I announced ambitious new targets to deliver a low carbon energy system including local ownership and we are already making good progress in meeting these.

“Two projects which have recently become operational help symbolise the change taking place. Yesterday I visited Pen y Cymoedd windfarm, the largest onshore wind project in England and Wales.

Vattenfall has supported and created more than a thousand jobs in Wales and the project delivers £1.8m annually into a community benefit fund.

“At a much smaller, community scale, we have Awel Aman Tawe’s wind development. It is wholly community owned, meaning all its profits are kept within the Amman Valley and their shareholders.

“However, Wales will need many more such projects at all scales and technologies, from community scale to major projects to meet our future energy needs.

“We believe it is possible to design energy developments that local people can support and buy into. The call for evidence I am launching today looks at how we can achieve this and deliver maximum benefits for the whole of Wales. I urge communities, developers, partner organisations and anyone with an interest to get involved and share their views with us.”

---

**£500,000 for town centre regeneration**

## [in Neath Port Talbot](#)

Minister for Housing and Regeneration Rebecca Evans AM announced the loan as she joined the Valleys Taskforce, which is working to deliver real change for the South Wales Valleys. The aim of the taskforce is to create good-quality jobs, closer to people's homes, improve people's skills and bring prosperity for all.

Rebecca Evans AM said:

"I am delighted to join the Valleys Taskforce, and I am committed to working with communities across the Valleys to create jobs and opportunities together. The £20 million Town Centre Loan Fund is helping to revitalise communities across Wales and it will have a real impact in the Neath Port Talbot area.

"The Town Centre Loan Fund aims to help bring empty, underused sites and premises in town centres back into use. It supports activities that increase footfall in our town centres, tackle empty sites and help businesses to grow and prosper. Once loans are repaid, the money is used again to fund new loans."

Neath Port Talbot Council will manage the loan, which is part of the £20 million Town Centre Loan Fund, currently supporting town centre regeneration in 17 local authority areas of Wales.

Llanelli provides an example of the benefits of Town Centre Loans. They have been used to fund the development of a derelict cinema into an entertainment centre, create homes out of derelict properties and to enable the demolition of an old building to create a new property which includes residential and commercial units.

---

## [First Minister offers further support to kick-start Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon](#)

Speaking with the tidal lagoon's CEO Mark Shorrocks this morning, the First Minister reiterated his support for the project and said he was ready and willing to provide further substantial investment to get the project off the ground.

This follows on from a letter the First Minister sent to Prime Minister Theresa May offering to cover some of the tidal lagoon's capital costs and urging the UK Government to give the project the go-ahead.

The Hendry report, published on 12 January last year, concluded that “the evidence is clear that tidal lagoons can play a cost effective role in the UK’s energy mix and there is considerable value in a small pathfinder project.” However, one year on, the UK Government has failed to make a decision on the project.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

“This would be the world’s first tidal lagoon power plant, which would create thousands of high quality jobs, supply a significant proportion of the UK’s energy needs and position Britain as a world leader in a new global industry.

“And, yet, the UK Government has been dragging its heels for over a year. This is leading to a growing sense of frustration among the Welsh business community and an increasing risk that the lack of a decision will turn into a decision not to proceed.

“Now is the time for the UK Government to stop stalling and get on with agreeing a strike price so we can make this transformative project a reality.”