

WEST MIDLANDS ISDN Newsletter

March 2025 Edition



VIDEO TRIAGE PILOT ENHANCES STROKE CARE

A recent pilot in the North and West Midlands has tested the effectiveness of pre-hospital video triage (PVT) for patients with a suspected Stroke in the pre-hospital setting. The pilot took place between West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) and The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (RWT), the aim was to improve the quality of triage by shifting from traditional telephone triage to real-time video.

Key Findings - The pilot found that while ambulance clinicians and hospital staff were initially sceptical of video triage, feedback quickly improved as the pilot progressed and staff became more versed in the process. Video triage was perceived to provide valuable visual information to Clinical Nurse Specialists, improving decision-making for complex cases. However, poor connectivity in rural areas and information governance challenges affected implementation.

Despite some technical hurdles, the use of video triage led to a reduction in hospital arrival-to-imaging times from a median of 33 minutes to 25 minutes. The time to assessment by a thrombolysis-capable decision-maker also improved. However, overall sensitivity and specificity in stroke diagnosis slightly declined during the pilot, possibly due to increased awareness and a broader scope of suspected cases being assessed. Interestingly the same change in sensitivity and specificity was noted in cases triaged by phone over the same time period, and video outperformed telephone during this time.

The Future - The pilot highlighted the need for improved digital infrastructure, which is expected to resolve when the emergency services network becomes fully live. Information governance led to the withdrawal of a site from the pilot which was disappointing and it is hoped these issues can be overcome. Moving forward, PVT has now been adopted as standard care at RWT and will soon be joined by Worcester Royal and Hereford County Hospitals.



SQUIRE WORKSTREAM UPDATE

As we continue to drive forward our initiatives, Georgina Charles, Midlands SQuiRe Manager shared the following update:

I will be running a series of workshops throughout the year at bimonthly intervals, covering a variety of topics that will be of value to community teams. These workshops will include sessions on completing EOIs, business cases, offering support post-project completion, and a shared learning day for the Midlands Squire project. These workshops will be tailored to ensure they meet the needs of our teams and contribute to the success of ongoing projects.

In addition to the workshops, I will be supporting the 6 projects identified from the benchmarking workshop. One key update to highlight is the change in funding for pulmonary, cardiac, and stroke rehabilitation. These areas were included in the 24/25 PLTC Targeted Service Development Fund (SDF) bundle, but for 25/26, this funding has been moved into ICB core programme allocations, with ringfencing now removed.

To help support project teams during this transition, I'll be working with ISDNs to create a bundle that demonstrates the impact of these services. This bundle will be shared with ICBs to help influence the release of funds for stroke rehabilitation. The ISDN has already shared an EOI, and we will be informing ICBs to expect EOIs from project teams.

We look forward to another productive year working together!



PATIENT & PUBLIC VOICE (PPV) GROUP

Our PPV Group met last month and discussions focused on the following:

- Patient members would like to get fitter and encouraged others to explore free resources such as the Stroke Association website and local councils where they have information on different levels of exercises following a stroke. You will find the links here [getting active after a stroke guide.pdf](#) [Strong & Steady Exercises - Solihull On The Move](#). There is also the Great Outdoors in Hereford where you can hire mobility scooters for a small fee [Forestryengland.uk/activities/all-terrain-mobility-scooters](#)
- Lack of Psychological support across the board - it was recognised as an important part of a patient's recovery alongside the limited rehabilitation support offered to patients discharged to their own home. We will focus on this area in the next meeting.
- Good Hope Hospital Therapy team in progress of setting up a Life after Stroke Group in the coming months. They are gathering a questionnaire to collate feedback. Future updates will be shared.
- Lack of awareness of SSNAP data and what it is used for, and recommendations to perhaps involve a patient voice with regards to how data is collated.



We would like to thank all members who participated in the discussions. The next meeting will take place on 1st May.

GIRFT LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME- REFLECTIONS

Two of our west midlands colleagues selected on the programme for 2024-25 reflected on their experiences.

Midlands Stroke Association Engagement Lead, Stuart Cooper said:

"The GIRFT course has been an exceptional experience for me, offering a perfect blend of inspiring venue, excellent facilities, (and great food!!) at the RCP Spine building in Liverpool. It not only consolidated my previous learnings but also boosted my confidence to influence the systems we work in."

Despite initial nerves about being among experienced health professionals, the welcoming and collaborative environment, where the Stroke Association is a key partner, quickly put me at ease. I've built strong relationships, gained a deeper understanding of our work environment, and helped others learn more about the Stroke Association. The mentorship aspect has been particularly valuable, providing regular support and a platform to share ideas and challenges. The well-paced and clear programme content further enhanced the overall experience."



Jane Gordijn, Stroke Partnership Manager for Herefordshire & Worcestershire ICS, shared the following:

"The course has given me the opportunity to learn and reflect upon my role as a leader which has helped me immensely in my role as Stroke Partnership Manager at Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB. I've grown in confidence and have a greater understanding of my strengths and opportunities for development."



On a separate note, we would like to congratulate Mariska Clossick from Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust for being selected a place on the programme for the class of 2025 -26.

GIRFT Stroke Leadership Academy - stroke specific programme



BHF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

BHF Healthcare Innovation Fund round 4 is now open for applications. They fund over £100 million of lifesaving research into heart and circulatory diseases each year. They support you when you need them most and they campaign for a healthier world.

Applications are invited to the fourth round of the British Heart Foundation (BHF) Healthcare Innovation Fund. BHF is seeking to test and evaluate innovative approaches to the delivery of improved services for patients with cardiovascular disease.

Awards of up to £350K will be made as part of a competitive application process with a limited overall budget. Applications will close on **Monday 28th April 2025** at midday.

Please visit BHF website for further details in how to apply [BHF Healthcare Innovation Fund - BHF](#)



MARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- ⇒ We are pleased to announce that the updated and much improved UHB website for stroke services is now live. Thanks to all UHB stroke teams who helped to put the contents together. Please click here [Stroke Services](#) to check it out!
- ⇒ The ISDN are preparing for their away day taking place on 9th April. The team will be discussing the 2 year workplan alongside review of projects and outcomes so far. We will share a summary of the event along with our next steps in a future update.
- ⇒ This month's West Midlands Thrombectomy Network meeting hosted two presentations on good practice on how to improve MT and TB rates across the patch. Many thanks to Dr Faizal Choudhry from Royal Stoke University Hospital and Dr Girish Muddegowda from Worcester Royal Hospital for their talks and support.
- ⇒ The regional Mechanical Thrombectomy repatriation SOP is now live across the West Midlands
- ⇒ TASC hosted a webinar on rehabilitation pathways out of hospital on 6th March. The presentation was well received and will be discussed further with our rehab teams across the patch.
- ⇒ Spasticity pathway is being developed for the West Midlands, led by Jonathan Craven of South Warwickshire Foundation Trust. We have reached out to the Cheshire and Mersey team who have done some similar work for shared learning. Watch this space for developments!

CLINICAL STROKE EDUCATION WEBINAR

West Midlands ISDN will be hosting a stroke education session as follows:

Date: 15th April 2025

Time: 14:00 to 16:00

The session will provide opportunities to share and discuss good working practice and case studies, and is aimed at clinical staff working in stroke/neurology and neuroradiology including consultants, trainee doctors and stroke nurse practitioners.

Topics of discussion:

- Large core thrombectomy trials - Speaker Dr Sissi Ispoglou, UHB
- Thrombectomy in patients aged above 80 – Speaker Dr Imran Khaiil, UHB

Each topic will be followed by a Q&A session.

If you would like to join the webinar, please contact WestMidlandsISDN@uhb.nhs.uk

The session will also be recorded and available on our [FutureNHS platform West Midlands Integrated Stroke Delivery Network \(ISDN\)](#) - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform

The next webinar will take place in the autumn.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- East Midlands ISDN Rehabilitation Conference - 26th March
- North Midlands ISDN Rehabilitation Conference - 2nd April
- Mechanical Thrombectomy Strategy Workshop hosted by NHSE - 3rd April
- West Midlands ISDN Away day - 9th April

IN THE NEXT EDITION

Stroke Association - unlocking potential | April highlights| ISDN away day