

WEST MIDLANDS ISDN Newsletter

May 2025 Edition



MAY IS STROKE AWARENESS MONTH

Every day in May, 240 people will wake up to the life-changing impact of a stroke.

Mums, dads, grandparents, young people, and even children can be left unable to move, see, speak, or even swallow. It's a traumatic, life-changing event that robs survivors and their families of the life they knew.

The Stroke Association is an amazing charity in the UK providing lifelong support for all stroke survivors and their families. Please help to join us in raising awareness of the impact of stroke and help more people [find strength through support](#).

Get Involved and choose an activity that suits you and your network:

- ⇒ Sing4Stroke: Host a mini concert—solo or group—to raise funds.
- ⇒ Sip for Stroke: Gather over tea, coffee and home-baked treats.
- ⇒ Golf for Stroke: Organise a fun tournament or putting challenge.
- ⇒ 31 Minutes of Exercise a Day: Commit to daily activity—yoga, walking, gardening, cycling—throughout May.

Sign up for any challenge via the Stroke Association website [Stroke Awareness Month | Stroke Association](#), and help build a stroke-ready West Midlands. Your efforts will directly support lifelong services for survivors and their families.



MIDLANDS SQUIRE EVENTS

The Midlands SQuiRe Manager, Georgina Charles, is planning a series of SQuiRe events for this year. These events are designed to foster learning, collaboration, and support within the region and across the broader network. The next event is taking place on **4th June** in Leicester.

More events will feature in future editions!

Midlands SQuiRe Events 2025: Unlock Learning, Collaboration & Improvement

Why Attend?

- **Practical Learning:** Gain actionable insights on all SQuiRe projects, quality improvement, sustaining project gains, navigating the ICSS model and lived experience.
- **Expert Speakers:** Hear from national and regional leaders, including SQuiRe leads, ICBS.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Connect with peers across the Midlands to share experiences and strategies.
- **Professional Development:** Enhance your skills and knowledge to drive impactful change in your community.

Midlands SQuiRe Projects Day

📍 In-person: Westbridge Place, 1 Westbridge Close, Leicester, LE3 5DR

📅 Wednesday, 4th June | ⌚ 09:30 AM - 3:30 PM

🗂️ Topic: Shared learning from SQuiRe Catalyst and QI projects

BURSARIES FOR QUALIFICATIONS IN CLINICAL RESEARCH DELIVERY LEADERSHIP

Apply now to take Masters level courses aligned with [Clinician Researcher Credentials Framework | NIHR](#). The qualifications are for all experienced healthcare practitioners who want to take on leadership roles in clinical research delivery.

Bursaries are available to pay the course fees for regulated health and care professionals, except doctors and dentists. The deadline for bursary applications is 1st July 2025 12noon. For further information, please visit the NIHR website.

The bursaries are part of a wider Healthcare professionals funding programme [Extra £30m a year to boost research careers for healthcare professionals | NIHR](#) to develop careers within specific professions. They are not available for some professions including doctors, dentists and clinical research practitioners. This restriction applies only to bursary and not course applications and all professions are eligible to apply for a place on one of the courses.

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria for the regulated health and care professionals bursaries but are still interested in taking one of the courses, you can visit our funding information page [Course funding | NIHR](#) to see what other funding is available.



THROMBOLYSIS IN ACUTE STROKE CARE (TASC) 2

The West Midlands ISDN took part in the TASC2 face-to-face workshop, which took place in London for all teams involved in this cohort. It was a great day to learn about the opportunities and challenges, and how both the National Stroke Team and NHS Elect can help to support innovation in improving thrombolysis rates across the country. The Patient and Carer Voice, Dr and Mrs Stephenson, on the day was inspiring to hear, and seeing the progress made was phenomenal. They emphasized the point that rehab is equally as important to a patient as getting the right treatment the first time, to allow for a quick and realistic recovery after stroke. The experience-based design approach was discussed by the NHS Elect team, as well as TASC updates. Dr David Hargroves, the National Clinical Director for the National Stroke Team, emphasized five main priorities he would like all teams to take forward at the frontline:

- ⇒ Quick diagnosis
- ⇒ Right treatment
- ⇒ Patient experience
- ⇒ Communications
- ⇒ Transfer of care

From the West Midlands, Russells Hall Hospital and Hereford County Hospital are enrolled on TASC2. They worked together to share their successes and hurdles, and to explore next steps. There was an opportunity to go around the room to network with other teams on TASC. The West Midlands ISDN will use this learning to work with all the West Midlands HASU sites to improve their thrombolysis rates and explore the bespoke rates generated by the SAMUEL tool on SSNAP. We will be setting up an Acute SSNAP group to talk about all acute data i.e. SSNAP metrics, target rates, TIA, to name a few topics.

Watch this space for further details!



NHSE MECHANICAL THROMBECTOMY VISIT

The National MT follow-up visit, led by Prof Steve Powis and Dr David Hargroves, took place on the morning of Friday, 16th May, at Coventry Hospital. University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire, University Hospitals Birmingham, and University Hospitals of North Midlands stroke teams provided updates on the progress made since the last visit, which took place in October 2024. In a short space of time, the teams were commended on the progress they have made and the work they will be actioning in due course. There were conversations on imaging, workforce, training opportunities, MT expansions—and, for the first time—rehabilitation was also discussed. This was a fantastic opportunity to showcase how the rehab journey is just as important as the MT journey, as there is no point in streamlining MT pathways without access to good-quality rehab. The West Midlands ISDN, on behalf of all the teams involved on the day, would like to thank the national team for the visit and has requested some support in following up on remaining and new actions.



MAY HIGHLIGHTS

- ⇒ Our Patient & Public Voice group met on 1st May, and we discussed the intensity of rehabilitation therapy in the community. Members felt that the current guideline recommendation of three hours of therapy, five days a week, was challenging and not realistic to achieve from both patient and clinical perspectives. The stroke therapy teams will use this feedback as a steer to support projects going forward.
- ⇒ The regional MT network meeting took place this month with 100% attendance from all sites. An informed discussion followed a review of SSNAP data and how we can work together to improve referral MT rates. The regional MT repatriation SOP was also discussed, and it was agreed to share the document with all site ED leads. Future meetings will discuss declined referral cases for deep-dive learning. BIASP workforce survey results for the West Midlands will also be discussed at the next meeting.
- ⇒ Birmingham & Solihull's CPD final session took place on 8th May to draw a close to the support for QI projects that have been set up. Future pathway work will be discussed, and an informed strategy agreed.
- ⇒ The ISDN residential, sponsored by the Stroke Association, took place on 15th and 16th May. This was a great event over two days, bringing together talks on the National Stroke Board priorities for 2025/26, overcoming challenges with engagement, working with data, stroke research, and a fantastic Q&A session with Prof. Steve Powis led by Juliet Bouverie, Chief Executive of the Stroke Association.
- ⇒ The Midlands ISDN teams presented to the NHSE Medical Directorate staff briefing for Stroke Awareness Month on 13th May. We took the opportunity to inform the audience about the prevalence of stroke and the life-saving treatments available, as well as the role of the ISDNs.

WORCESTERSHIRE STROKE TEAMS CHARITY EVENT

Charity bike ride

Raising money for the Stroke Association

Please come along to support Worcestershire's stroke services!

Abbey Stadium in Redditch
31 May 2025, 07:30-19:30

Worcestershire's NHS stroke teams will be cycling 240 miles on static bikes to represent the number of people who wake up to the catastrophic impact of a stroke every day.

Come along to cheer them on, enjoy a healthy bake sale, and get your blood pressure and heart rate checked by a healthcare professional!

For more information and to donate, please scan the QR code or visit <https://www.justgiving.com/page/sarah-hudson-5>

To support National Stroke Awareness month in May, Our Worcestershire stroke team led by Sarah Hudson, (Integrated Services Lead for Stroke) has organised a charity event in collaboration with the Stroke Association and Abbey Stadium In Redditch. Please join the team if you can on 31st May to cheer them on! For more information and how to donate please visit

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/sarah-hudson-5>

UPCOMING EVENTS

UK and ROI Acute Stroke Simulation Course Dates available. For more information [please click here](#)

SQuiRe Event: SQuiRe Project Showcase 4th June Leicester

Acute follow up site visits

IN THE NEXT EDITION

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